



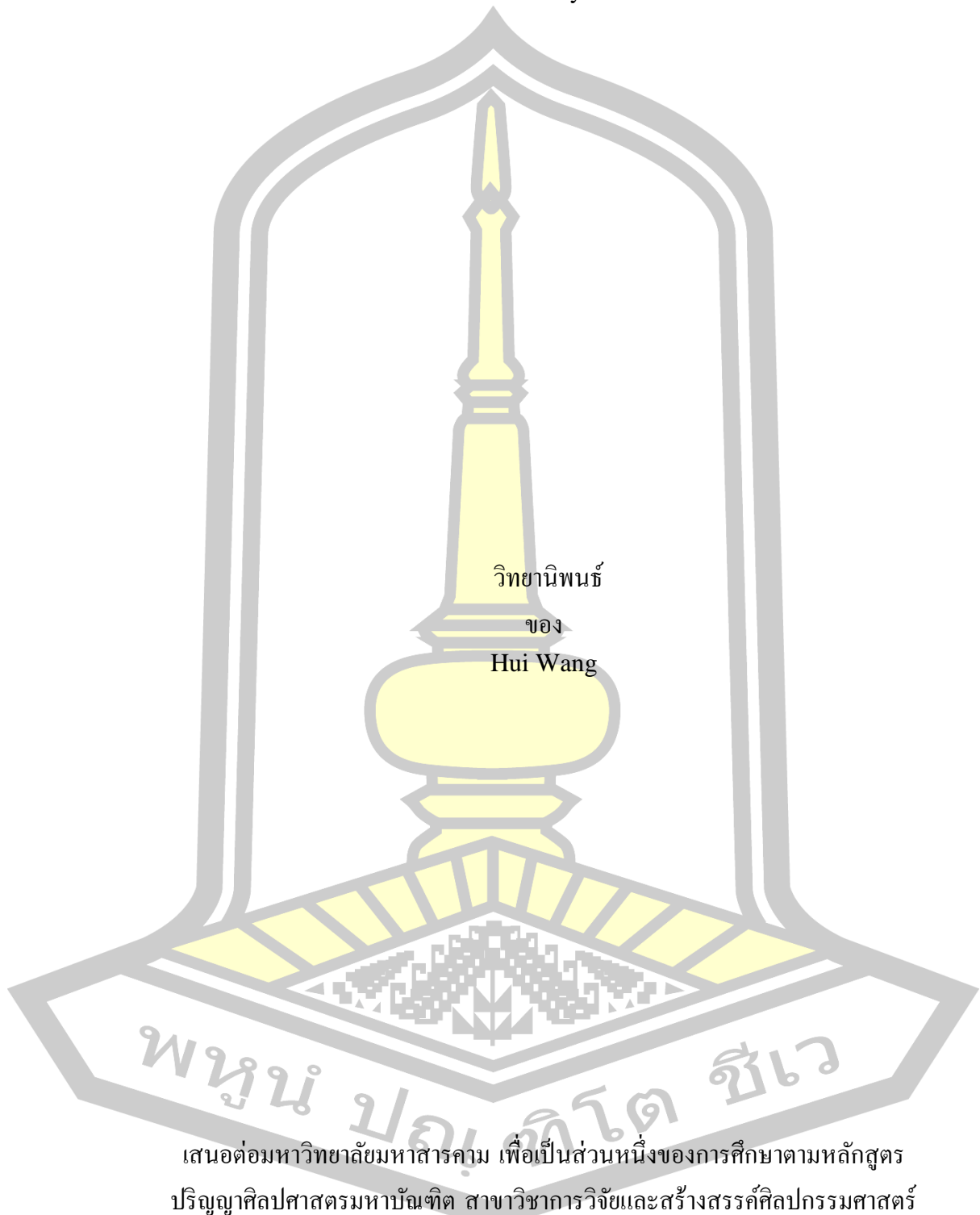
Patterns in Mazu Culture: Symbolic Meaning and Expression in Contemporary Society

Hui Wang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Master of Arts in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation  
March 2024

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Patterns in Mazu Culture: Symbolic Meaning and Expression in Contemporary Society



วิทยานิพนธ์  
ของ  
Hui Wang

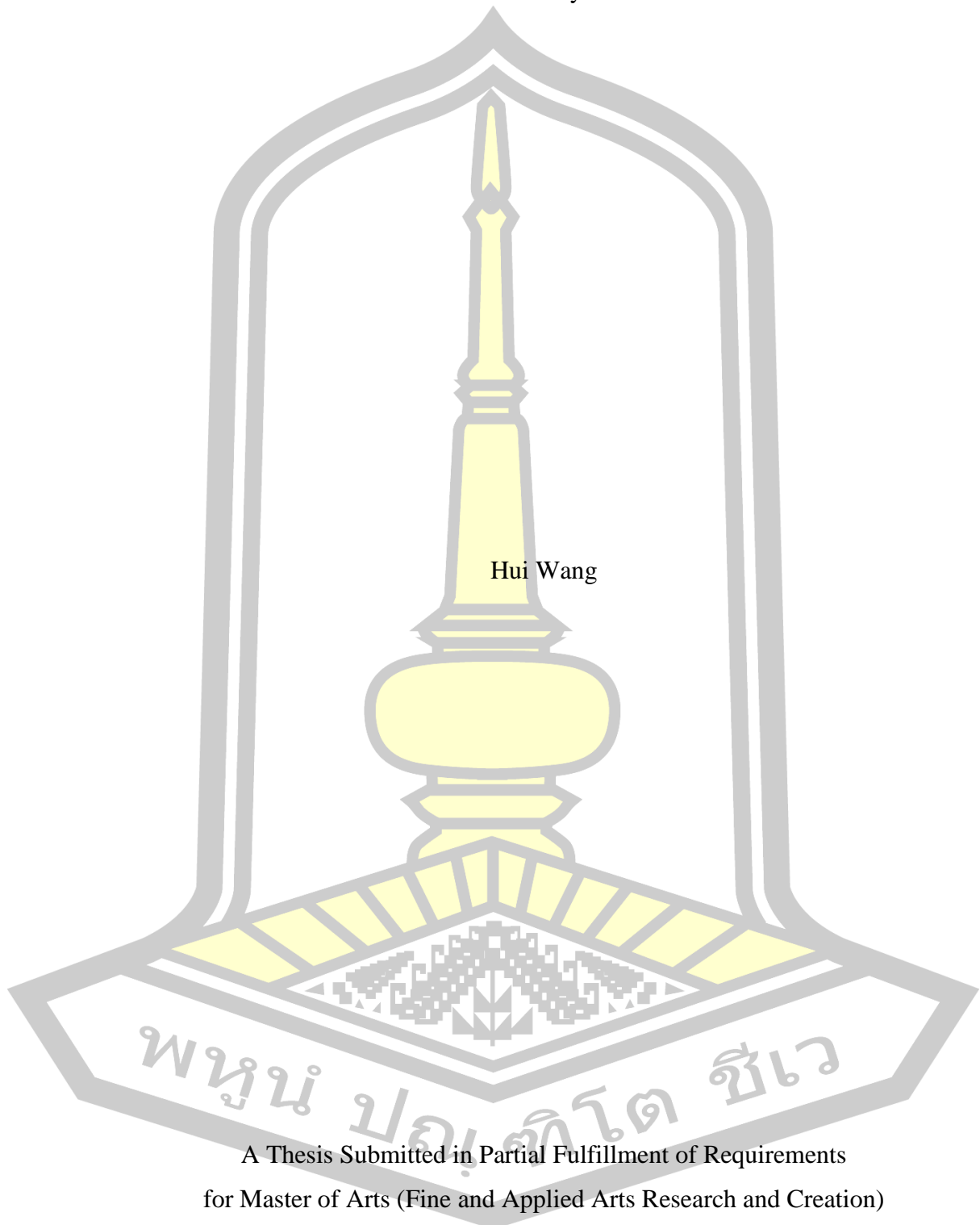
พูน บุญเกิด ชีเว

เสนอต่อมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร  
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Patterns in Mazu Culture: Symbolic Meaning and Expression in Contemporary Society



Hui Wang

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
for Master of Arts (Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation)

March 2024

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Mr. Hui Wang , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation at Mahasarakham University

Examining Committee

Chairman

( Li Yingfeng , Ph.D.)

Advisor

( Yihan Ke , Ph.D.)

Committee

(Assoc. Prof. Ratanachote  
Thienmongkol , Ph.D.)

Committee

(Asst. Prof. Metta Sirisuk , Ph.D.)

Mahasarakham University has granted approval to accept this Thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation

(Asst. Prof. Peera Phanlukthao , Ph.D.)

Dean of Faculty of Fine - Applied Arts  
and Cultural Science

(Assoc. Prof. Krit Chaimoon , Ph.D.)

Dean of Graduate School

พุทธ ปัญญา วิจัย

|                   |                                                                                   |              |                                                |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>TITLE</b>      | Patterns in Mazu Culture: Symbolic Meaning and Expression in Contemporary Society |              |                                                |
| <b>AUTHOR</b>     | Hui Wang                                                                          |              |                                                |
| <b>ADVISORS</b>   | Yihan Ke , Ph.D.                                                                  |              |                                                |
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### ABSTRACT

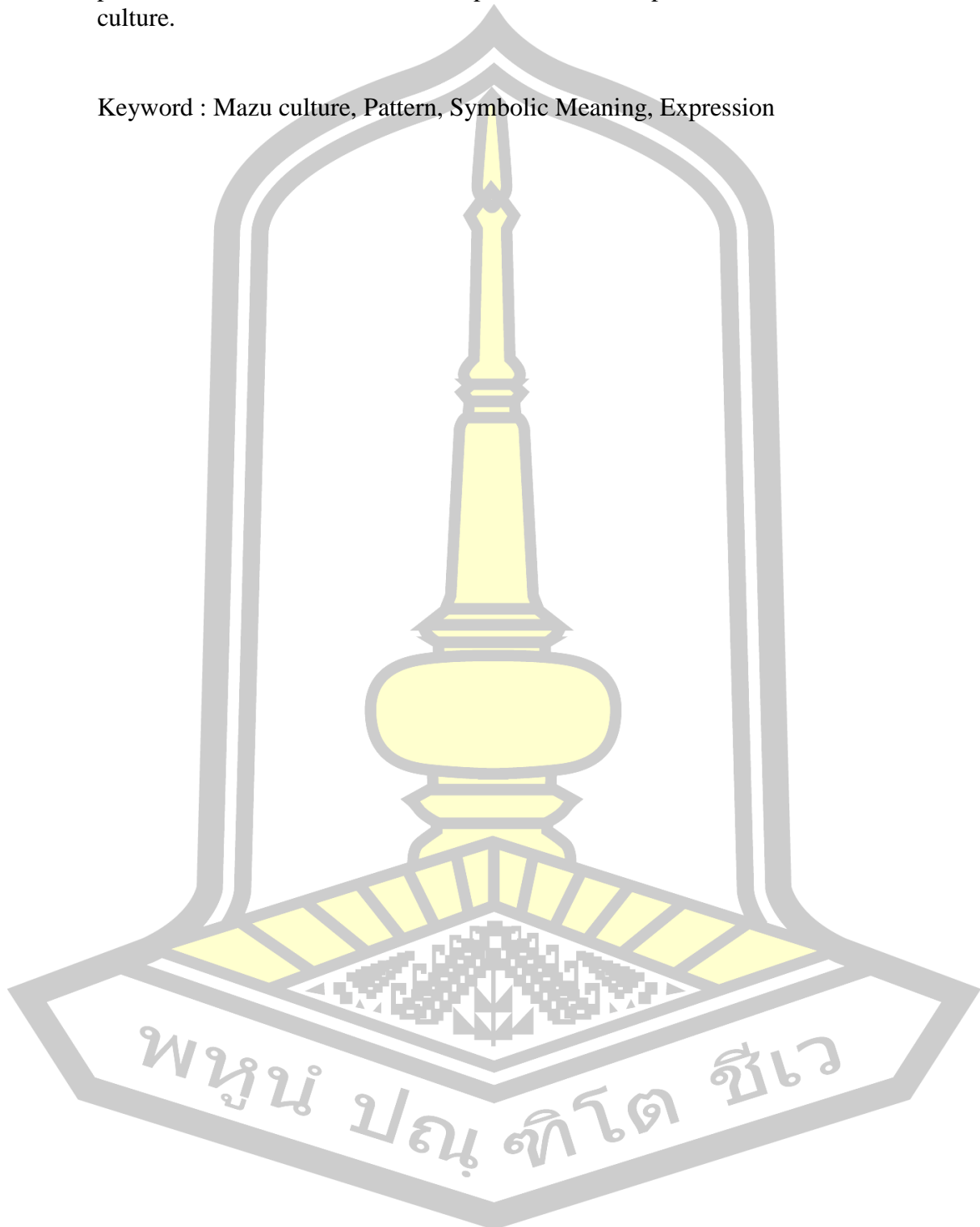
Mazu culture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture, and its patterns are widely inherited and used as cultural symbols. With the development of contemporary society, the symbolic meaning and expression of patterns in Mazu culture are constantly changing and evolving. This article aims to explore the symbolic meaning and expression of patterns in Mazu culture in the context of contemporary society, so as to better inherit and promote Mazu culture. This article aims to explore the connotation and extension of Mazu culture by analyzing the symbolic meaning and expression of patterns in Mazu culture, and provide theoretical reference for promoting the development and inheritance of Mazu culture. At the same time, the research results of this paper are helpful to enrich the diversity of social culture and improve people's awareness and attention to traditional culture.

This study adopts the method of combining literature data method and field investigation method. First of all, by consulting a large amount of literature, systematically sort out the relevant information on the basic characteristics, symbolic meaning and expression methods of patterns in Mazu culture. Secondly, combined with the data collected in the field survey, the current situation of patterns in Mazu culture is analyzed and summarized. This study found that the symbolic meaning of patterns in Mazu culture includes religious belief, regional culture, historical heritage and humanistic spirit. At the same time, the expressions of patterns in Mazu culture are also diverse, including painting, carving, weaving and embroidery, enamel and metal and other techniques. In the context of contemporary society, the inheritance and development of patterns in Mazu culture is facing many challenges, such as marketization, shallow culture and formalization. To this end, this paper puts forward some suggestions and suggestions, such as strengthening cultural inheritance education, emphasizing cultural innovation and improving the level of cultural consciousness.

This article makes an in-depth discussion on the symbolic meaning and expression of patterns in Mazu culture in the context of contemporary society, discovers some problems and challenges, and puts forward some suggestions and suggestions. It is believed that these research results can play an important role in

promoting the inheritance, innovation and development of Mazu culture, and also provide methods and ideas for in-depth research and promotion of Chinese traditional culture.

Keyword : Mazu culture, Pattern, Symbolic Meaning, Expression



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Hui Wang

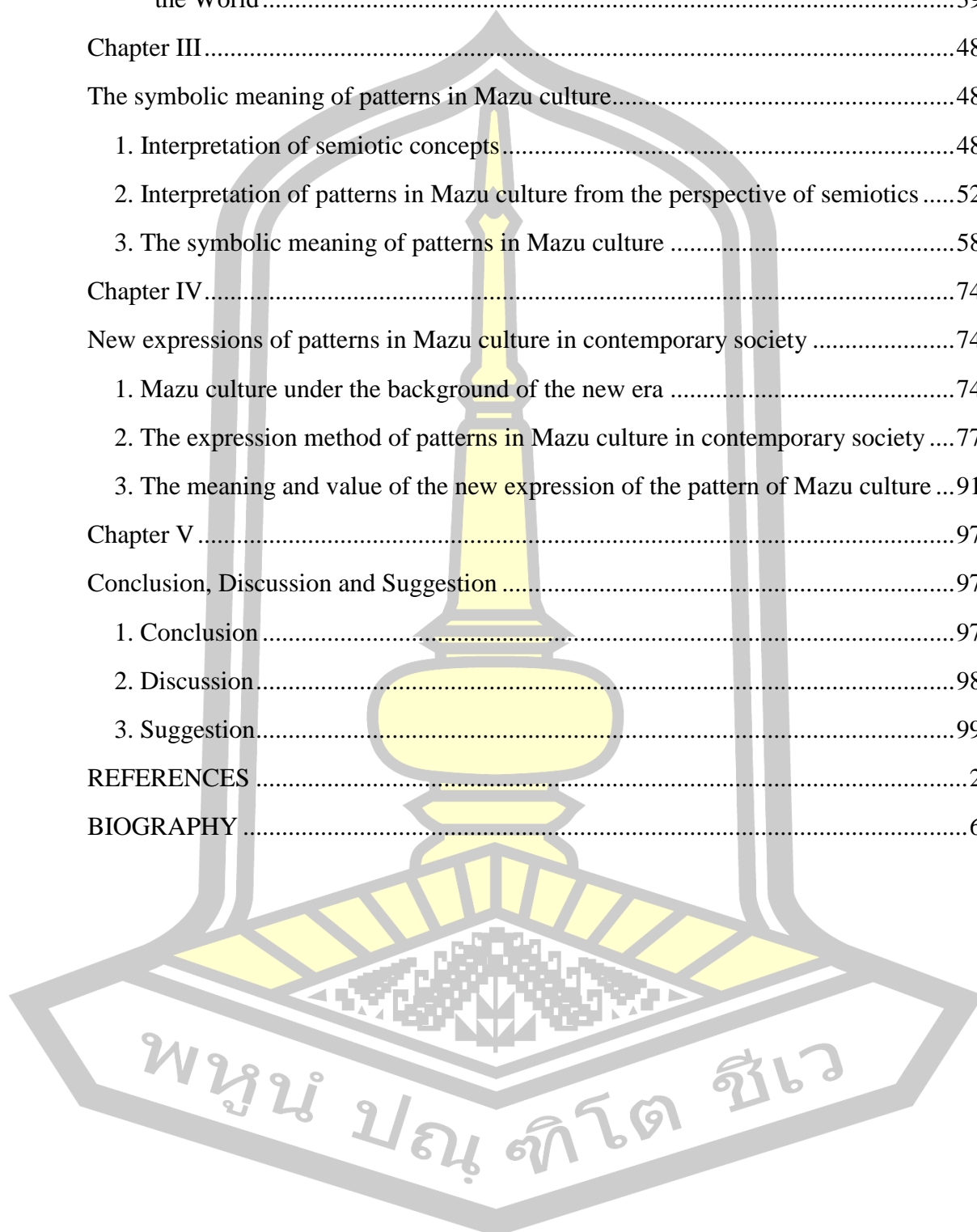
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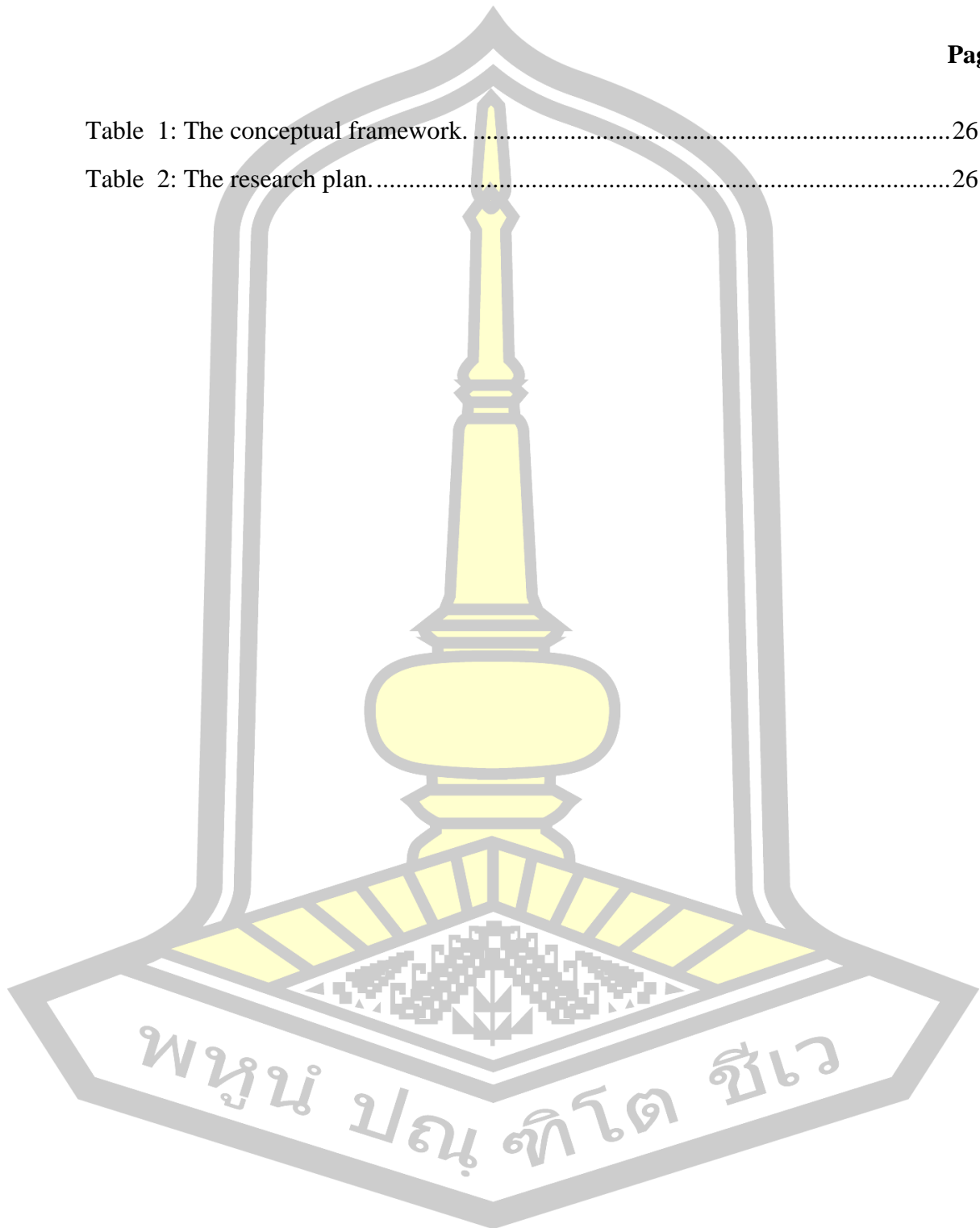


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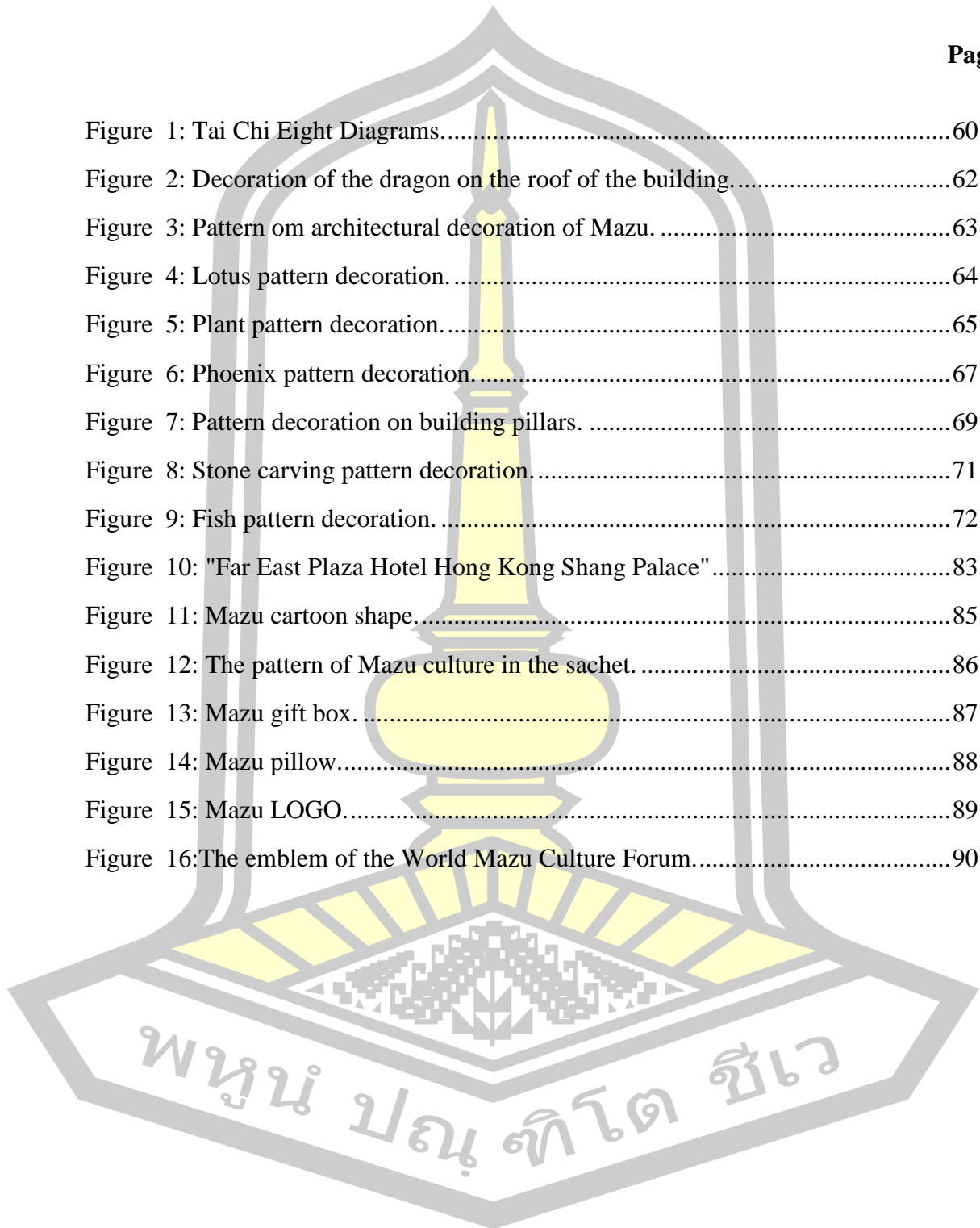
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## Chapter I

### Research Proposal

#### 1. Background of Research

In the beginning, word of mouth among people was a meaningful way to spread Mazu culture. After receiving the commendation from the emperor of the feudal dynasty, more literati paid attention to and paid attention to Mazu culture and began to collect historical data, organize and record related Mazu's story. In addition to oral transmission, the main credit for the inheritance and development of Mazu culture is the records of the literati. Literature is an essential manifestation of human spiritual needs, and this spiritual need strongly promotes the production and dissemination of literature. Yan Libo's research points out that protecting national cultural classics and making them spread is a critical way to promote the realization of national cultural inheritance. The literati's worship of Mazu culture has prompted the production of many excellent literary works, such as "Ten Wonders of Boating on March 21" by Liu Kezhuang<sup>1</sup> in the Song Dynasty, "Sending Song Chengfu's Eunuch to Celebrate the Heavenly Concubine" by Yu Ji in the Yuan Dynasty. (L Yachi. 2019)

The earliest research on Mazu dance was the record of the "brown sedan chair dance" in "Compilation of Chinese Ethnic Folk Dances" (Fujian Volume), published in 1996. In 2006, Professor Huang Mingzhu of Fujian Normal University revealed for the first time the cultural connotations of the folk dances "playing with a knife on a sedan chair" and "putting a palm sedan chair." Mazu belief is the foundation of Mazu cultural performance art, and the way of inheritance is closely related to it. Dance and drama performances are widespread in various religious worship activities among the folk. For example, dance is mainly performed in various ceremonies on the day of worship.

The belief in Mazu culture has led to the formation of many folk customs and related sacrificial ceremonies. There are also differences in the days and ceremonies commemorating Mazu in different places. For example, on the birthday of Mazu, the Meizhou Island Temple Fair will hold activities related to the sacrifice of Mazu, with rich and colorful contents, such as grand ceremonies, sacrificial activities, and so on. Fishermen in Macau and Hong Kong have a tradition of offering sacrifices to the God of Wealth. On the fourth day of the first lunar month, all fishermen sail their fishing

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<sup>1</sup> Born in Putian County, Fujian Province, he was a poet of the bold and unconstrained style in the Southern Song Dynasty, and a poet of the Jianghu Poetry School.

boats into the waters in front of the Mazu Temple, with the boat's bow facing Mazu and praying for Mazu's blessing for the fishing activities at sea in the next year. Chi Yanqiong believes that festivals are an important and visible cultural event that exists in all ethnic groups in human society, symbolizing the culture of a nation with strong local characteristics and cultural symbols with meaningful content.

The tourism industry of Mazu Culture combines cultural protection and economic development, and achieving a balance between economic and social benefits is the principle of cultural inheritance and development. Therefore, the development of the Mazu cultural industry, especially the tourism industry, constitutes an integral part of the Mazu culture. "Meizhou Island is located on the banks of Meizhou Bay in the middle of the Gold Coast of Fujian Province, where Mazu Lin Mo was born. The Mazu Temple in the north of Meizhou Island is dedicated to Mazu and the ancestor of other Mazu temples worldwide. Meizhou Island is close to the sea, with a beautiful environment and natural tourism resources. With the approval of the Fujian Provincial Government, it has been developed as an intangible cultural tourist attraction, which has driven the development of local tourism facilities and promoted the development of the local economy."(L Lijuan, 2009) In 2013, the Putian Municipal Government also issued a work task breakdown plan for "Several Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Meizhou Island National Tourism Resort" to build Meizhou Island into an international Mazu cultural exchange center.

"The development of Mazu culture has benefited from the spread of the people, the support of the government in various periods, and the development of China's shipping industry. Mazu Lin Mo was born in the first year of Song Taizu Jianlong. The Song Dynasty was a dynasty that developed maritime trade. The Song Dynasty established its maritime army, providing a channel and convenience for the widespread Mazu culture. According to relevant historical records, in the fourth year of Xuanhe, Song Huizong sent an envoy to Gaoli<sup>2</sup> in the middle of the road. The big ship he was sailing suddenly encountered a violent storm while sailing at sea. The crew prayed for Mazu's blessing at sea, and the wind and rain stopped suddenly. The boat arrived at its destination smoothly. Afterward, Yundi reported the matter to the emperor, who named Mazu Temple on Meizhou Island 'Shunji.'"(Z Mei, 2015) This was the first time that the official association with Mazu Temple was officially associated with the Mazu Temple. Due to the title granted by the emperor, Mazu Temple is more loved by the residents, and the status of Mazu as a marine protection deity has also been established. In foreign countries, Japan was an early country influenced by Mazu.

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<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Koryo Dynasty, Wang's Koryo, it is one of the ancient countries on the Korean Peninsula.

After Japanese people who often go out to sea for fishing accepted the Mazu culture, the Mazu culture gradually evolved into the "Mazu Association," forming the custom of regular pilgrimage. In addition to Japan, Mazu culture spread northward along the "Oriental Maritime Silk Road" to the Korean Peninsula and other Northeast Asian countries and finally crossed the Bering Strait to North America and other places. Mazu culture gradually spread to all continents. After a long history, Mazu's blessing has evolved from a single prayer for safety at sea to a goddess of protection for maritime trade and maritime expeditions, and even beyond the protection of the sea, eliminating demons and disasters, curing diseases and flood control, etc. Blessed range. Taking the Mazu Temple on Meizhou Island as the ancestral temple, many places at home and abroad have established places to worship Mazu, most of which are named after the "Tianhou Palace." According to statistics, as of 2010, there were nearly 5,000 Mazu temples worldwide, and there were more than 1,300 in Fujian Province. There were more than 1,200 Mazu temples in Taiwan and Meizhou Mazu temples, with nearly 200 million believers, in more than 20 countries and regions around the world.

“Definition of symbols the concept of "symbols" originated in Western academic circles. Due to various symbols in history, culture, and real life, "symbols" cover a wide range of content and include many types. Different people have different understandings of symbols, and there are many definitions of symbols. As early as the fourth century, Augustine, a Christian thinker in the Roman Empire, defined a symbol: a symbol is a thing that reminds us of another thing. The definition of sign proposed by American philosopher Morris in the early twentieth century is considered to be the pioneering work of the definition of sign in modern ‘semiology.’ The expression is: a sign "represents" something other than it.” **(Hawkes. 1960)**

Moreover, Morris proposes a sign is "a two-faced being like a two-faced god who sees a portal. It is a mixture of a signifying element and a signifying element. The expressing element makes up the expressing aspect and the signifying element aspect. Constitutes the content aspect." It is impossible to exhaust all symbolic definitions here. Based on the research results of previous scholars, the definition of "symbol" is summarized: a symbol is a thing that is generated by accident or deliberately containing some referential meaning, that is, a kind of thing that can be generated by some self-evident or convention. The tradition of using specific language rules, image features, and referential connotations to indicate something that different from it.

Introduction to the Thought of Various Schools of Semiotics. The prominent representatives of modern semiotics are Saussure, Pierce, Morris, Cassirer, Susan

Lange, Roland Barthes, and so on. The core of their theory is briefly described as follows: 1. Saussure's semiotic thought is generally regarded by the academic community as one of the principal founders of semiotics. Saussure believes language is a particular symbol system for expressing ideas, such as words, Braille, gestures, speech, and more. Language is also the most critical symbol system of all symbols. Saussure's modern linguistics is regarded as the embryonic form of modern semiotics, which provides the basis for the later development of semiotics. Saussure believes that although the language is also a member of the symbol system, it can realize the meaning of symbols more than other symbols, so language, the most complex and extensive system, is the model in the whole semiotics.

Contemporary mainstream cultural forms are constantly changing to visual culture. An era of "image-based survival" marked by "reading pictures" has quietly entered the lives of the public. The creation, dissemination, and inheritance of visual images and symbols occupy an increasingly important position in contemporary visual culture. The interdependence of the two basic concepts of "visual symbols" and "communication" enables various human cultural forms to be presented through visual communication. Human beings are born with the worship of images. As the saying goes: A picture is worth a thousand words. As early as the beginning of human civilization, when the characters and symbols were not formed, the understanding, communication, and exchange of images have become essential means for people to spread information. With the development of human society, information media in the form of visual symbols has always played an essential role in the evolution and development of human culture, carrying the function of cultural inheritance. Painting art, popular newspapers and periodicals, modern photography, film and television, and network information. All embody visual symbols' significant meaning and function. They have entered our lives profoundly and affect our cognition and understanding of the world. Almost all people have to admit: whether people face it positively or avoid it negatively, a "picture reading era" has quietly arrived. As early as the 1930s, Heidegger expressed the "world image age," pointing out that the world is grasped and understood as an image.

A *symbol* is a sign commonly agreed by people to refer to a specific object. It includes two connotations:

- On the one hand, it has an objective form that can be perceived.
- On the other hand, it is the carrier of meaning and an externalized form of spirit. The relationship between the symbol and the reflected object is realized through meaning.

A sign is always a sign with meaning, and meaning is always presented in a particular form of sign. In symbol transmission, the sender and receiver transfer information through encoding and decoding. Specifically, it is a process of transforming meaning or information into symbols and restoring symbols to information or meaning, a bilateral and mutually influencing process. A visual symbol is an image symbol, a visual language whose morphological structure is close to the reality of things. There is a high degree of conformity between the image of the visual symbol and the object. The image "acts as a sign employing features similar to itself and the object."

“According to the classification method of symbol taxonomy, visual symbols can be classified into "visual non-linguistic symbols" in the non-linguistic symbol system. Paintings, sculptures, architecture, documentary photography, news pictures, image logos, advertising design, film, and television art all fall into this category. Culture is divided into broad sense and narrow sense. In the broad sense, culture refers to the sum of all material and spiritual products created by human beings. In the narrow sense, culture refers to spiritual products, including language, literature, art, and all ideologies.”(S Xuemei. 2016) The cultural communication referred to in this article is a spiritual culture with an ideological nature, and the Mazu culture, like other cultures, has the characteristic of spreading around. This process of diffusion is also the process of dissemination. Human culture is a life process of continuous flow, evolution, and reproduction. Once a culture is produced, there is an impulse to "diffusion" and "transfer" outward. Mazu culture is no exception.

Mazu culture has apparent diffusion from its birth as a marine culture. Since Song Dynasty, Mazu culture has been expanding outward along with the development of China's marine industry, and it has continued to this day. The effect of cultural dissemination is related to many factors, mainly depending on the practical value, difficulty level, prestige of civilization, adaptability of the times, and resistance to the adversity of the culture itself. Mazu culture has developed and continued in the long history of more than a thousand years. On the one hand, it is because of spiritual value as a folk belief and practical function as a goddess of the sea.

On the other hand, it shows that Mazu culture can always keep pace with the times. Proactively use new media to spread itself, showing adaptability to the times. Visual symbols have natural advantages unmatched by other abstract symbols. Through visual observation and experience, we can break through language barriers, eliminate text barriers, achieve meaning-sharing, gain understanding and interaction, and achieve cultural and emotional communication. The dissemination of culture has always been based on the development of communication technology and uses media as channels and tools to spread and expand influence. In this era of "image-based



survival," how to use visual symbols to serve the dissemination of Mazu culture, how can Mazu culture break through cultural and ethnic regionality and differences so that people of different countries, regions, ages, and languages can pass the dissemination of information by image media is the focus of this article.

“From the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties to modern times, the belief in Mazu has continued, the myths and stories of Mazu have continued to evolve, the content of Mazu's deity has been constantly enriched, and the number of Mazu believers has continued to increase. As one of the materialized carriers of Mazu beliefs and customs, Mazu costumes mainly show the development of two mainstream trends. One is the costumes of Mazu statues in Mazu temples; Dress up in Mazu clothes. Based on active beliefs and materialized clothing, Mazu clothing cultural resources also show two mainstream trends at the level of material resources and non-material resources in the development process of continuous integration and interaction with mainstream social, cultural resources.”(Y Xiaoli. 2010)

Mazu temples, ceremonies, statues, and clothes have gradually become a symbol, a code, and a symbol recognized by the people. Portable accessories related to Mazu's beliefs and customs are another way of expressing or believing in Mazu's beliefs. Incense pouches, Mazu scarves, shoes, and other simple clothing accessories are just like the carrier of Mazu's divine power and the avatar of the gods. It can be seen that the cultural resources of Mazu clothing are a multi-component, which not only contains the cultural resources of the tangible material level, such as clothing styles, colors, patterns, materials, and production techniques, but also includes folk clothing customs, aesthetic taste, color hobbies, cultural mentality, and other intangible spiritual and cultural resources. From the perspective of Mazu's clothing cultural resources, the material level of clothing cultural resources has spawned the non-material level of clothing cultural resources, and the non-material cultural resources have cultivated material cultural resources.

Many symbols in Mazu culture can also be extracted, such as sacrificial aspects. Whenever Mazu goes on a tour or pays a visit to the ancestors, all these ceremonial objects are made by people dressed up as servants, soldiers, civil officials, martial judges, and other people. Alternatively, carry or carry, arrange them in a particular order, call forward and hold back. These are also excellent sources from which symbols can be extracted.

Mazu's cultural and creative products are developed based on Fujian and Taiwan's distinctive regional cultures. Its design and development rely on the

geographical advantages of Fujian and Taiwan, focusing on the development of Mazu culture with the characteristics of marine civilization in this region and in-depth exploration of Mazu. The humanistic connotation of culture, combined with local folk culture, aims to use modern design techniques to develop cultural and creative products with brand influence and high added value. Mazu culture takes Mazu's beliefs and customs as the core and praises Mazu's spirit of virtue, good deeds, and great love. It takes "Mazu Temple as the prominent activity place and expresses itself through sacrificial activities, legends and allusions, folk customs, and traditional arts. This traditional culture covers multi-disciplinary fields such as folklore, history, religion, oceanography, architecture, archaeology, and art. Combined, eclectic, and gradually formed a unique Mazu cultural system. Among them, Mazu's beliefs and customs originated in the Song Dynasty. In its long development history, it has been respected and carried forward by the rulers of the past dynasties. The Mazu belief has gradually become a critical folk belief in the coastal areas of China." (L Lifang, 2018)

In 2009, Mazu's beliefs and customs were included in the "Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO<sup>3</sup>, demonstrating the historical value and far-reaching influence of Mazu culture on human civilization. The historical value of Mazu culture is not only manifested in the humanistic values and traditional virtues represented by the spirit of Mazu, such as benevolence, punishing evil and persuading goodness, but also it is the shared traditional cultural foundation of Fujian and Taiwan, and an essential spirit exchanges and connections between Fujian and Taiwan. It is a bond that inherits the shared beliefs and values of the people of the two places. During the thousand-year historical process, Mazu culture has gradually presented religious, maritime, and folk cultural characteristics, which have become the characteristics that the design elements of Mazu's cultural and creative products should consider.

China has carried out a long-term exploration of the cultural and creative product market. As a result, many colleges and universities have also set up this major, and some enterprises and individuals have also participated in designing modern cultural and creative products. Nevertheless, on the whole, there are still areas for improvement in China's cultural and creative product market.

The lack of flexibility in the use of cultural elements in China has a long history and has left behind a splendid Chinese culture, so it has become the primary resource

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

for the design of cultural and creative products. “Design is a process of absorption, fusion, and application. Some designers cannot keep up with the trend of the times in the design process and still adopt traditional design concepts, and the application of elements in the design is unreasonable and unnatural.”(Y Xiaoli. 2010) For example, the derivative products of museums were mostly commodities in museum gift shops in the past, or many design elements were piled together. The form of the products could not meet people's aesthetic requirements, and the color matching needed to be more reasonable, so the added value of the products was not high. Putting this product in the living room cannot show the beauty brought by the artwork and even destroy the indoor environment. this is because the design of such cultural and creative products does not inherit and promote traditional culture, nor does it integrate with life.

The problem of imitation is severe. In many regions' cultural and creative product markets, most products are the same. However, different regions have different development histories and cultural characteristics, so the cultural and creative products should be designed according to the region's characteristics. However, the development time of China's cultural and creative industry is short, and the consumer group needs to be more significant. Therefore, the designed cultural and creative products need to be improved in terms of their quality and added value of products. For example, the items in some memorial halls are sold to consumers after simple processing. Therefore, these items need to show the local characteristics better, and souvenirs in many areas are very similar.

Lack of integrity in product design style The integrity of product design style is an effective way to enhance product-added value and brand influence. In the process of building and developing the brand itself, it should also actively develop a unified design style. On the one hand, product design shows relevant information about the product, and on the other hand, it is also an essential representative of the corporate image, which can effectively enhance the product's influence in the consumers' minds. “Nowadays, people's living standards are constantly improving. Short-term design can no longer play a role in maintaining the enduring effect of corporate branding. In the development of enterprises, although high-quality quick-acting design can enable enterprises to obtain higher profits quickly, it could be more conducive to building a relatively perfect corporate culture. If the company replaces the core designer, the design style of the product is bound to undergo some changes. For example, some well-known domestic brands have developed trendy brands, and their enterprises have developed very well. However, because they cannot maintain a relatively uniform

design style or cannot be updated and created promptly, they will not be able to do it in the long run and keep up with the trend of the times.” (L Yuhao. 2017)

“After the Qing Dynasty, the image of Mazu was stereotyped in the form of a crown, which continues to this day. Interestingly, the number of crowns on the folk statues of Mazu did not follow the format of nine and often appeared in numbers such as ten, eleven, and twelve. Initially, Mazu's crown and hat could reflect Mazu's unique identity, but due to the limited knowledge of folk makeup artists, they needed help understanding the rules and regulations in traditional clothing culture. In their opinion, the statue of Mazu is tall and crowned with a crown on the head. This kind of people's simple aesthetics makes the crowns of some folk Mazu statues appear ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen. For example, the statue of Shunji Temple in Xunpu, Quanzhou is ten, the statue of Mazu in Pandan Tianhou Temple in Fuzhou is ten, and the statue of Mazu in Tianhou Temple in Lianjiang Langqi is ten. The simple, casual, and unconstrained aesthetic psychology. The number of crowns can be arbitrary, and the decoration of the crown is no exception.”(Z Beibei. 2016) The crown decoration of the Mazu image pursues the complex appearance of the appearance. The mother of the crown hat has a row in the front layer, and there are also inner and outer rows, plus many decorations, such as various pompoms, tassels, and metal sequins, beading, make it bejeweled, complicated, and dazzling, which is directly influenced by the folk aesthetics of theatrical costumes. Pompoms and tassels are commonly used in bright and eye-catching theatrical headwear, suitable for stage use. In the northwestern and eastern Fujian regions, they also like to add a red shawl to the Mazu crown.

In the Lukang area of Taiwan, they like to add a conical hood to the Mazu crown called "Feng Hat." They think this can make the statue beautiful and generous. Next, add the style of the Mazu statue. Hoods and cloaks protect crowns and clothes from rain and dust when going out. On the stage, when the imperial officials visited privately in micro-clothing, they wore hoods and capes symbolically. Therefore, Mazu wearing a hood can also express an image of her running around and saving the world. The Mazu statue in Nantian Temple, Nantian Ao, Taiwan wears a crown nearly two or three times the height of the head. It is densely decorated with all kinds of jewelry and jade. Using Mazu as a platform, artists are showing themselves: in the name of faith, doing art. In addition, affected by the living environment, practicality, and subjective aesthetic desire, folk aesthetic modeling prefers strong and bright contrasting colors. Mazu robes are mostly woven, embroidered with red silk, and decorated with pom-poms, sequins, beads, etc.

The sides and lower edges of the robes have orange, dark blue, or black stripes, and the colors are gorgeous. In the crown-making of Mazu statues, he likes to mix red

and green, which are related to life and nature, and uses a small amount of black, yellow, and white. The strong and bright decoration has a rustic style. The statues of Mazu in Fujian and Taiwan will be dressed in clothes, hats, and robes. This is a gift for the supplicant, and the layers are stacked to form another appearance. Folk crafts have a characteristic that "things must be decorated with pictures, pictures must be intentional, and meanings must be auspicious." Therefore, the patterns of Mazu costumes are full of auspicious meanings.

“According to the characteristics of materials and craftsmanship, folk artists flexibly use patterns in Mazu costumes to create their creations, pinning their hopes for a better future. Most of Mazu's crown clothes are painted with dragon patterns or other auspicious patterns, which are now in the Putian City Museum. Mazu's orange-red robe in the Zhenlan Palace in Dajia, Taiwan, has a four-clawed boa constrictor embroidered on the front, a double phoenix wearing a peony on the bottom, and a scroll pattern of the sea, water, river, and cliff and waves on the bottom. The shapes of these dragons express a profound mystic life experience, constitute a sacred and solemn atmosphere of dignity, and cater to the noble image of dragons in folk traditions. The dragon and the wind are mythical animals imagined by people. They have the incredible power to subdue demons and blessings.”(D Qian. 2015) They symbolize that Mazu has excellent divine power, enough to resist various disasters and conquer nature. The shape of the peony symbolizes a prosperous and auspicious life and symbolizes the noble status of Mazu. The phoenix peony pattern also hints at Mazu's goddess status. The patterns of "Carp Leaping over the Dragon Gate" and "Phoenix Wearing Peony" express the pursuit of life and the best wishes of folk artists with auspicious meanings.

In the popular fan-painted Mazu image in southern Fujian, the center of Mazu's robe is decorated with a lion, which is unique and may have the same meaning of warding off evil spirits as the wind lion on the bow of a fishing boat. Mazu's clothing patterns imply not only good luck but also contain special symbols of folklore. The statue of Mazu in the fishing village of Hui'an Peninsula, Fujian, is unique with two lotus petals embroidered on both arms of the robe. This peculiar costume decoration comes from a legend: it is said that Mazu, in order to eliminate the two monsters, the turtles and snakes, which harmed the local fishermen, under the guidance of the sacred book, resolutely endured severe pain and cut off two pieces of meat from the body to make fishing bait, and finally succeeded in making demons. Local fishermen deeply felt the kindness of Mazu, who sacrificed their lives to save the people, and embroidered lotus petals on Mazu's clothes, alluding to two pieces of flesh, to remind future generations not to forget it. (M Fangfei. 2011)

In China, the lotus flower has always been praised by people because of its noble character of "coming out of the mud without staining." It is regarded as representative of noble image. The lotus flower is also one of the people's favorite decorative patterns. The bright and clean lotus petals not only look like flesh but also emphasize and conceal Mazu's noble character of sacrificing himself for the people. Mazu's costumes are based on human costumes that correspond to the status and rank given by the emperor and are processed by people's imagination, aiming to promote their noble status. People add patterns and interpretations they think are reasonable to the decoration of Mazu's clothing, which expresses good wishes and has the meaning of moral education.

Contemporary mainstream cultural forms are constantly changing to visual culture. An era of "image-based survival" marked by "reading pictures" has quietly entered the lives of the public. The creation, dissemination, and inheritance of visual images and symbols occupy an increasingly important position in contemporary visual culture. The interdependence of the two basic concepts of "visual symbols" and "communication" enables various human cultural forms to be presented through visual communication. Human beings are born with the worship of images. As the saying goes: A picture is worth a thousand words. As early as the beginning of human civilization, when the characters and symbols were not formed, the understanding, communication, and exchange of images have become essential means for people to spread information. With the development of human society, information media in the form of visual symbols has always played an essential role in the evolution and development of human culture, carrying the function of cultural inheritance. Painting art, popular newspapers and periodicals, modern photography, film and television, network information, etc., all embody the critical meaning and function of visual symbols, which have entered our lives so profoundly and affect our cognition and understanding of the world. Almost everyone has to admit: whether people face it positively or avoid it passively, an "era of reading pictures" has quietly arrived. As early as the 1930s, Heidegger expressed the "world image age," pointing out that the world is grasped and understood as an image. (X Ming, 2009)

A symbol is a sign commonly agreed by people to refer to a particular object. It includes two connotations:

On the one hand, it has an objective form that can be perceived.

On the other hand, it is the carrier of meaning and an externalized form of spirit.

The relationship between the symbol and the reflected object is realized through meaning.

A sign is always a sign with meaning, and meaning is always presented in a particular form of sign. In symbol transmission, the sender and receiver transfer information through encoding and decoding. Specifically, it is a process of transforming meaning or information into symbols and restoring symbols to information or meaning, a bilateral and mutually influencing process. A visual symbol is an image symbol, a visual language whose morphological structure is close to the reality of things. There is a high degree of conformity between the image of the visual symbol and the object. The image "acts as a sign employing some features that are similar to itself and the object." According to the classification method of symbol taxonomy, visual symbols can be classified into "visual non-linguistic symbols" in the non-linguistic symbol system. Painting works, sculpture architecture, documentary photography, news pictures, image logos, advertising design, and film and television art belong to this category. (Y Xiaoli, 2010)

Culture is divided into broad sense and narrow sense. In the broad sense, culture refers to the total of all material and spiritual products created by human beings. In the narrow sense, culture refers to spiritual products, including language, literature, art, and all ideologies. The cultural dissemination referred to in this article is a spiritual culture with an ideological nature, and the Mazu culture, like other cultures, has the characteristic of spreading around. This process of diffusion is also the process of dissemination. Human culture is a life process that constantly flows, evolves, and reproduces. Once a culture is produced, there is an impulse to "diffusion" and "transfer" outward. Mazu culture is no exception. Mazu culture has apparent diffusion from the beginning of its birth as a marine culture. Since Song Dynasty, Mazu culture has been expanding outward along with the development of China's marine industry and has continued to this day. The effect of cultural dissemination is related to many factors, mainly depending on the practical value, difficulty level, prestige of civilization, adaptability of the times, and resistance to the adversity of the culture itself.

Mazu culture has developed and continued in the long history of more than a thousand years. On the one hand, it is because of its spiritual value as a folk belief and its practical function as a goddess of the sea. On the other hand, it shows that Mazu culture can always keep pace with the times. Proactively use new media to spread itself, showing adaptability to the times. Visual symbols have natural advantages unmatched by other abstract symbols. Through visual observation and experience, we can break through language barriers, eliminate text barriers, achieve meaning-sharing, gain understanding and interaction, and achieve cultural and emotional communication. The dissemination of culture has always been based on the development of communication technology and uses the media as channels and tools

to spread and expand its influence. In this era of "image-based survival," how to use visual symbols to disseminate Mazu culture, how can Mazu culture break through cultural and ethnic regionality and differences so that people of different countries, regions, ages, and languages can pass. The dissemination of information by image media is the focus of this article.

“Human design activities create the symbolic world. As some design scholars said: "All communication is carried out using symbols as a medium." Symbols are the medium for design information dissemination. The German philosopher Cassirer also defined human beings as "animals of signs" and further believed that "all cultural forms are forms of signs." Culture is the complete result of human historical experience, and the visual factors can best reflect its national spirit. Symbols from culture are to find a kind of national spirit. Visual symbols are not the reproduction of traditional images but the expression of national spirit. Images, like language, both reproduce and reconstruct social and psychological reality. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully analyze the characteristics and meaning of visual symbols in the communication environment.”(Z Weifeng. 2018)

The visual symbol is a kind of image symbol that conveys information vividly, intuitively, and clearly. It not only makes up for the ambiguity and dullness of the text but also gives the audience a feeling of "seeing is believing." The "signifier" and "signified" of a visual symbol, that is, the image of the visual symbol and the object, have a high degree of consistency. The relationship between them is close and direct. When expressing a particular figurative concept, the description of words or language must go through a transformation process from abstraction to figuration. At the same time, visual symbols are directly transmitted from figurative to figurative, which simplifies the process of our interpretation of symbols and makes it easier to obtain symbolic information. “At the same time, this dramatically avoids the interference and deviation of meaning in the process of conveying. Therefore, image language achieves the effect of ‘at a glance’ and ‘what you see is what you get.’ For example, the video display of Mazu's image is far more direct and vivid than the text description. Visual symbols are a more effective way of communication to adapt to the era of reading pictures. Even if there is no text, the reader can still appreciate the meaning contained in the picture.” (Z Beibei. 2014) Of course, the application should pay attention to some obstacles and deficiencies. For example, the ambiguity of pictures and the difference in the audience's reading ability of pictures often lead to the discrepancy between the encoding and decoding of the sender and receiver, while the abstract text can be well resolved.



Image reading ability is a universal ability of human beings. Anyone with normal visual function can read visual symbols such as images. It can be seen that the threshold for learning and using visual language is much lower than that of complex text language because image language is a kind of image symbol, and its inner meaning is the "signified," and the external form is the "signifier." Unity, as long as people living in society can naturally recognize the visual symbols of real life and do not need to rely on acquired acquisition and training to master. Of course, at a deeper level, the ability to read the content of images, especially the dissemination of some abstract visual symbols, and the understanding of their inner meanings need to be recognized and judged with the help of human social practical experience, such as the statues and paintings of Mazu. Art requires certain humanistic qualities and knowledge accumulation.

Whether physical or psychological, the image information aligns with the psychology of public acceptance. "Looking" is an innate ability of human beings. Before learning to use language, people know how to "see." No matter the history of human social development or the process of each person's growth, visual symbols always enter people's cognitive domain before language symbols. "The cognition of visual symbols relies more on people's visual experience, which mostly comes from accumulation in daily life rather than systematic learning. Human visual experience has many things in common, making visual symbols a universal language. In today's 'image reading era,' the phenomenon of visual cultural communication has become an important channel for information dissemination. Experience has shown that one-third of the nerves in the human brain innervate the visual organ. Therefore, popular culture relies more and more on the presentation and dissemination of visual symbols. In addition to busy work, more humanized and simplified image information has become the first choice for people to receive information. Therefore, this kind of psychological satisfaction is more dependent on the way of conveying visual symbols based on images."(Z Mei, 2015)

Mazu culture is an essential spiritual bond that unites both sides of the Taiwan Strait and overseas Chinese, and the people-to-people exchanges between the two sides of the strait have never been interrupted. In recent years, with the increasing cultural exchanges between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, the communication of Mazu culture in visual symbols has begun to enter the field of cultural exchanges. Governments and non-governmental organizations across the Taiwan Strait and the three places have also realized the critical role of the communication of Mazu cultural pictures. Through the Mazu culture pictures, film and television art, and other forms jointly held by the two sides of the strait, believers worldwide can have a deeper

understanding of the long-standing content of Mazu culture and experience the rich connotation of thousands of years of beliefs and customs.

After 2000, Taiwan has successively promulgated the "Challenge 2008: Key Development Plan for Taiwan" (2002), "Creative Taiwan - Cultural and Creative Industries Development Plan" (2009), and "Cultural and Creative Industries Development Law" (2010) and other related policies and regulations to promote the development of cultural and creative industries, learn from the research and development achievements in this field in the West, give full play to the advantages of effective integration of design disciplines and industrial development, and achieve remarkable achievements in the field of cultural and creative industries. Here are four examples. Analyze the advantages of its cultural and creative products.

“Functional innovation design of Taiwan Mazu cultural and creative products  
With the transformation and development of the cultural and creative industry in recent years, the functional types of Taiwan Mazu cultural and creative products have been further expanded. Products with blessings and blessings, such as sachets, lucky bags, royal guards, incense bags, etc., design and develop products closely related to daily life.”(Z Weifeng, 2018) For example, cakes and biscuits, backpacks for travel, baby care supplies, the four treasures of the study, and dynamic maps, among which "Mazu Backpack" and "Mazu Dynamic Maps" are the most representative. "Mazu Backpack" is based on the Chaotian Palace sedan suit as the design inspiration, retains the basic shape of the loose tailoring of the sedan suit, and outlines the Ruteng in the costume as the decorative element of the backpack at the edge. At the same time, a logo with the word "Mazu" is designed in the center of the backpack with a decorative circular frame. The design of the whole product is straightforward and full of cultural charm. The design concept of "Mazu Dynamic Stickers" is to make Mazu's image deeply rooted in the hearts of the people and into the public's field of vision, changing the usual solemn demeanor and modeling with themes such as "shy," "angry," "like," "Oh my god" and so on. Showing Mazu's different attitudes and actions, reinterpreting them from a humanized perspective, and bringing popular consumer psychology into the concept of research and development, this contrasting effect makes Mazu culture more "grounded."

The in-depth excavation of cultural connotations is the internal driving force for researching and developing cultural and creative products. The excavation and application of cultural connotation of Mazu cultural and creative products in Taiwan can be mainly divided into three categories: one is the belief in the beliefs of Mazu, the second is the actual activities and legends and allusions of Mazu culture, and the third is the combination of local folk culture and regional characteristics. First,

"Cultural and Creative Paper Tape - Ping An Fu Style" follows the elements of Mazu's beliefs and customs to pray for peace and blessings. The text and symbols are integrated into the decoration of the tape and expressed in the form of seal script, and traditional Chinese painting is used as the background tone. The golden stone gas of calligraphy adds historical charm and artistic beauty to the runes and achieves the design effect of integrating the concept of peace and the practicality of office supplies. Secondly, the packaging design of "Happy New Year's Eve" is a case of excavating the fusion of myths and legends in Mazu culture and popular culture. The cartoon image is used to design Mazu, clairvoyant, and Shunfenger. The image matches the popular image of Pleasant Goat in the children's field. It highlights the matching effect of popular elements and traditional culture. Finally, "Tiger Lord Easy Travel Card" is a cultural and creative wealth fund jointly issued by Easy Card and Taiwan Beigang Chaotian Temple. The theme of Tiger Lord comes from the gods of folk beliefs in Taiwan. In Taiwan's traditional Beigang Mazu circumnavigation activity, there is a "Tiger Lord Eat Cannons" ceremony. The more firecrackers in the ceremony, the more prosperous the firecrackers are, which means to drive away bad luck and bring peace, good luck, and wealth. Because of this, this product takes the saying "Tiger Lord bites the money" as its theme, combines Taiwan's folk beliefs with the vision of traditional customs, and combines cultural and creative ways to meet the consumer needs of believers to pray for blessings and ensure safety. **(Q Jinliang, 1999)**

Modeling innovation is a contemporary expression of Mazu cultural and creative products through the refinement and combination of design elements, showing traditional art with symbolic shapes. Representative products include "Bagua Caojing Umbrella" and "The Virgin of Heaven" Dajiexiang slow". The "Bagua Caojing Umbrella" design is derived from the structural decoration of the Lugang Tianhou Palace - caisson. The caisson is located above the interior building, in the shape of an umbrella, supported by fine bucket arches, overhanging layer by layer, and the caisson is decorated with Tempera and relief. There is a record in "Customs and Tongyi". "This hall is used as a patio. The well is the image of the East Well. The water chestnut is the thing in the water. It is all because of fire." The ancient Chinese believed that it was the main water, and built a well at the highest point of the building and decorated it with algae aquatic plants such as lotus, water chestnut, lotus, etc., in order to suppress the evil spirits of fire and protect the safety of the building. This product's research and development concept combines the caisson's design elements with the umbrella and makes it the positioning of a "safety umbrella." **(Y Rongmin, 2007)**

The design focuses on the refinement and redesign of the structural decoration and transforms the overhanging structure of the caisson into a flat design. The purpose is to give the caisson totem auspicious meanings on the umbrella surface, symbolizing the function of blessing, exorcising evil, and keeping the peace. The entire "Bagua Caojing Umbrella" series also uses the red and yellow colors in traditional Chinese painting as the background color, showing a solid Chinese artistic flavor. "Our Lady of Heaven" The "Dajiaxiang Slow" series has designed three styles "bright red version," "black ink version," and "flash gold version," with three different color schemes of "red, yellow and white," "black, yellow and white" and "yellow black and white." In the background, the phoenix turned back is wrapped around the border of the four characters, "The Holy Mother of Heaven." The phoenix represents the noble and elegant female image in traditional culture to be recruited, and it also alludes to Mazu in traditional culture. In addition, the product is redesigned with a steady and vigorous font for the four characters of "Mother of Heaven," reflecting the solemnity and momentum of Mazu, and a fire-shaped pattern is designed between the words.

The theme of low-carbon and environmental protection is a new trend in the research and development of cultural and creative products. Taiwan's Mazu cultural and creative products are also gradually entering this field. The representative products are "Beigang Plough" and "Fragrant Ash Ping Yi." The material of the "Beigang Plough Cannon" is to recycle the plow shavings that were collected during the birth of Mazu, organized by the Chaotian Temple in Beigang. This design is derived from the local custom concept that collecting firecracker scraps to celebrate the gods can bring good luck, and the sacred ceremony of Mazu around the border brings blessings and blessings to firecrackers. Therefore, this product has the characteristics of low-carbon environmental protection and blessing, implying the vision of praying for peace and happiness. Dajia Zhenlan Palace's "Incense Ash Peace Dress" uses nanotechnology to filter and filter the incense ash in the incense burner and uses the process to make yarn into yarn, combined with cotton thread to create a cultural shift that promotes Mazu's beliefs and customs. The above two series of products reflect that cultural and creative products can not only promote traditional beliefs and customs but also integrate the green production concept of recycling and reuse, reduce the energy consumption of products, and effectively promote the further deepening of the production model of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

As a cultural symbol, Mazu carries many ideological connotations and has also become the object of expressing the needs of different social classes. Mazu's belief can meet the spiritual and material needs of different social classes in China, and its

image spreads far beyond other images in all social classes. The first is Mazu as a tool symbol. After the Mazu symbol entered the vision of the ancient Chinese feudal rulers, it became a tool used by the rulers. An effective communication activity should meet two primary conditions: "one is to symbolize things, and the other is to further incorporate the symbolized things into a clear value judgment system. The communication process can be simple and effective if these two principles are satisfied." From an epistemological point of view, it is difficult for people to describe complicated things objectively.

Therefore, people need to use relevant symbols to organize complicated things and use symbols to explain reality. As far as Mazu belief is concerned, most Mazu believers are affected by their knowledge structure, education level, etc. They need help to independently and seriously think and summarize the complicated Mazu phenomenon, and they cannot raise their feelings to the level of theory. They need more abstract symbols to judge Mazu's many phenomena. Because of this, the rulers constructed Mazu as an easy-to-understand, relatively simple symbol. That is, it is constructed as a symbol of loyalty to the monarch, protection of the people, virtue, and good deeds. Once the symbolic connotation of Mazu was established, the rulers put the conceptualized Mazu into the conceptual system of Confucian political education. For the ruler, the Mazu symbol's original meaning is unimportant. **(Z Weifeng. 1018)**

The matter is how people can use the Mazu symbol and Mazu resources. In other words, the Mazu symbol was just a tool for the feudal rulers to achieve their goals. Feudal rulers do not need to describe the details of Mazu miracles to Mazu believers, and they can get the respect and worship of Mazu believers and do not need to stimulate them to think independently and deeply about the connotation of Confucian morality. In order to construct beliefs, we invent a set of symbols and symbols, which are continuously developed, enriched, and developed as part of the beliefs. As far as its function is concerned, the role of symbols is straightforward. Symbols can form part of the language of words, visual language, road conditions ahead, or some impressive product introduction, product packaging, and so on.

Furthermore, a symbol is a visual image or symbol to express a particular thought - a more profound record of universal truth. What a symbol conveys to us is simple information that can be retrieved for instant perception. A symbol is a visual image or a symbol that expresses a certain kind of thought. Therefore, sorting and

analyzing the visual symbols of Mazu and their symbolic meanings can effectively analyze the existing creations and make suggestions.

After extracting symbols from these existing Mazu image art and re-innovating them, how to apply them to modern media is the subject of this research. Most of the existing designs only recreate the image of Mazu and do not go deep into each symbol in the symbol. The details lead to creating images that cannot be deeply rooted in the people's hearts. According to this research, the symbols extracted and used in the media that modern people accept carry forward the traditional Mazu culture and make it affect more young people to resonate with it so that young people can resonate with them. People autonomously promote to the people around them so that the traditional Mazu culture can be integrated into the environment.

## **2. Purpose of Research / Objective**

- 2.1 To study the development history of Mazu and the introduction of Mazu culture.
- 2.2 To analyze the symbolic meanings of patterns in Mazu culture.
- 2.3 To research the expressions of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society.

## **3. Research question**

- 3.1 What is the history of Mazu and what is the feature of Mazu culture ?
- 3.2 How to use the principles of semiotics to recreate Mazu's visual elements?
- 3.3 What is the influence of the patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society?

## **4. Definition of Terms**

Definition of Mazu's visual elements: All visual communication-based elements about Mazu include paintings, videos, costumes, and festival customs.

4.1 Mazu Culture: A Source of Ideas. The primary ideological sources of Mazu culture are Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. First, Confucianism in Mazu

culture is the ideological foundation of Mazu culture. The characteristics of Confucianism contained in Mazu culture are the fundamental reason why Mazu has been recognized and respected by the imperial courts of all dynasties. Philosophical thought. Mazu culture's main philosophical thoughts are filial piety, constant change, and the concept of human beings and gods.

Filial piety and kindness are the foundation of Mazu's cultural and philosophical thoughts. The concept of filial piety and kindness is studied from the perspective of Confucian philosophy and moral ethics, and its primary sources of reality are the benevolence and righteous deeds of Mazu during shi lifetime and the legends and stories that appeared after Mazu passed away. The core of filial piety and kindness is the thought of "kindness" and "loyalty" in Mazu culture, mainly manifested in protecting the country and the people, punishing evil, and promoting goodness in Mazu culture.

Mazu culture is of great value in contemporary times. First of all, Mazu culture is an integral part of Chinese excellent traditional culture, which is reflected in the core idea of Mazu culture inheriting Chinese excellent traditional culture, the traditional virtues of condensing Chinese excellent traditional culture, and the humanistic spirit rich in Chinese excellent traditional culture. Secondly, the Mazu culture is in harmony with the socialist core values, which is reflected in the fact that the Mazu culture and the socialist core values have the same goals, similar functions, and similar spirits.

4.2 Patterns in Mazu culture: 1. Making Bi paintings, Wenfeng Fu, Southern Song Dynasty Mazu's wood carved Madame Statue, Xianyou Lingyingtang Southern Song Dynasty Mazu's Muli Madame Statue, Xianyou Damon Palace's gold lacquer woodcarving Mazu statue, Dajia Town, Taiwan The wood-carved statue of the concubine in Lan Gong, the statue of the Virgin of the Concubine in the water and land of Xilai Temple in the Ming Dynasty, and the star map of the Ming Dynasty in the Tianhou Palace of Hanjiang.

Books on Longevity Engravings. Ancestor's Stone Carvings on Mountain Cliffs, Stele of "Praise and Seal of the Past Dynasties," "Stone of the Construction of Tianhou Palace," and the plaque of "Brightening of the Holy Relics."

4.3 Traditional costumes: half-red trousers, Mazu shoes, sailboat hairpin

The overall shape of the palace and temple buildings (Meizhou Mazu Temple, Xianlianggang Tianhou Ancestral Temple, Tianjin Tianfei Temple, Taiwan Beigang

Chaotian Temple), partial structure (archway, stage, wall photo, Xumi seat), decorative patterns (boiled fish pattern, seahorse pattern)

Traditional patterns: figure patterns, animal patterns, plant patterns, allegorical patterns

### Modern Relevant Graphic Design

Semiotics: A visual symbol is an image symbol that conveys information vividly, intuitively, and clearly. It not only makes up for the ambiguity and dullness of the text but also makes the audience feel that "seeing is believing." The "signifier" and "signified" of a visual symbol, that is, the image of the visual symbol and the object, have a high degree of consistency. The relationship between them is close and direct. When expressing a specific figurative concept, the description of words or language needs to transform from abstraction to figuration. At the same time, visual symbols are directly transmitted from figurative to figurative, which simplifies the process of our interpretation of symbols and makes the acquisition of symbolic information easier. At the same time, this dramatically avoids the interference and deviation of meaning in the process of conveying.

Therefore, image language achieves the effect of "at a glance" and "what you see is what you get." For example, the video display of Mazu's image is far more direct and vivid than the text description. Visual symbols are a more effective way of communication to adapt to the era of reading pictures. Even if there is no text, the reader can still appreciate the meaning contained in the picture. Of course, the application should pay attention to some obstacles and deficiencies. For example, the ambiguity of pictures and the difference in the audience's reading ability of pictures often lead to the discrepancy between the encoding and decoding of the sender and receiver, while abstract words can be well resolved.

## 5. Scope of Research

### 5.1 Research area

The research area of this paper is Meizhou Island in Putian City, Fujian Province, it is located on the southeast coast of China.

### 5.2 Time



5.2.1 Patterns in Mazu culture (from Tang Dynasty to present, about more than one thousand years)

5.2.2 The expressions of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society, (from 2000 to present)

5.3 Another

Graphic design, costume design, cultural and creative product design, UI design, website design, etc.

## 6. Research Methods

6.1 Population and Sample

6.1.1 Local residents

6.1.2 Tourists

6.1.3 Student

6.1.4 Meizhou Island Management Committee

6.1.5 Meizhou Island Board of Directors

6.1.6 Graphic Designer

6.2 Instrumentation

Computers, hand-painted boards, recording software, notebooks, fountain pens, cars.

6.3 Data Collection

Use questionnaires, interviews, and other methods to obtain information and indirectly collect the market share of Mazu's image and re-innovation and the popularity of Mazu's image among young groups through questionnaires. Then, through interviews, directly conduct individual interviews with teachers and staff related to cultural and creative industries, obtain first-hand information directly, conduct collective interviews with local villagers and tourists in the local area and

randomly select people to inquire and obtain information. Afterward, the author will interview the local management committee to inquire about the current progress of relevant activities and the program's feasibility.

#### 6.4 Data Analysis

First, tabulate all the data collected and group them according to the research purpose or objective to ensure that people have brought in all the data collected using all research tools or instruments.

Second, analyze the research data. When we analyze research data, we often use statistics, and in qualitative research, we describe the situation that must fit the goal or purpose. Use numbers, frequencies, or percentages or what pictures, spoken words, and diaries are needed. The essential data recording tools are cameras and tape recorders. The camera is used to collect image data, and there are live image data about Mazu-related activities—recorders record conversations in formal or informal settings for further data analysis and research. Within the scope of a scientific and technological research project or project engaged in, conduct a series of mental and physical labor, such as experimental observation, investigation, and comprehensive analysis, and conduct review and appraisal to confirm academic and creative results' significance and practical value.

#### 6.5 Research presentation

The research in this paper will be submitted as a master's thesis and published in international journals and included in SCOPUS.

### 7. Literature Review

*Symbols and Symbols*, written by Philip Wilkinson, Miranda Bruce Mitford, UK. Beijing New Sanlian Bookstore, translated by Zhou Jilan.

#### Definition and analysis

In order to frame the belief, we invented a set of symbols and symbols, and developed and enriched them to become a part of the belief. These symbols remind us of the harmony between human beings and the universe. Although symbols and symbols are not widely recognizable, they are sometimes difficult to distinguish. As

far as its function is concerned, the role of symbols is very direct. Symbols may form part of written language and visual language.

People are human because we have brains and thoughts. Our brains are always asking various questions. We not only live on the earth, but also want to know: why are we here? Where do we come from? What happens after death? How do natural phenomena affect us and what is their significance to us? For thousands of years, human beings have created some structures called beliefs, and spread these beliefs to varying degrees. The purpose is to answer these questions that have been imprinted on human minds since ancient times.

#### Definition and analysis

In order to frame the belief, we invented a set of symbols and symbols, and developed and enriched them to become a part of the belief. These symbols remind us of the harmony between human beings and the universe. Although symbols and symbols have a wide range of identifications, they are sometimes difficult to distinguish. As far as their functions are concerned, the role of symbols is very direct. Symbols may form part of written language and visual language, warning signs of road information ahead, or some impressive product introduction, commodity packaging, etc. The symbol conveys to us a simple information that can be retrieved instantaneously. In other words, the symbol, which uses a visual image or symbol to express a certain idea, is a more profound record of the universal truth. For example, fire not only symbolizes the sun, but also symbolizes all the positive life forces around us. Spring flowers symbolize resurrection and new life. It is precisely because of these symbols that our life becomes richer and more meaningful.

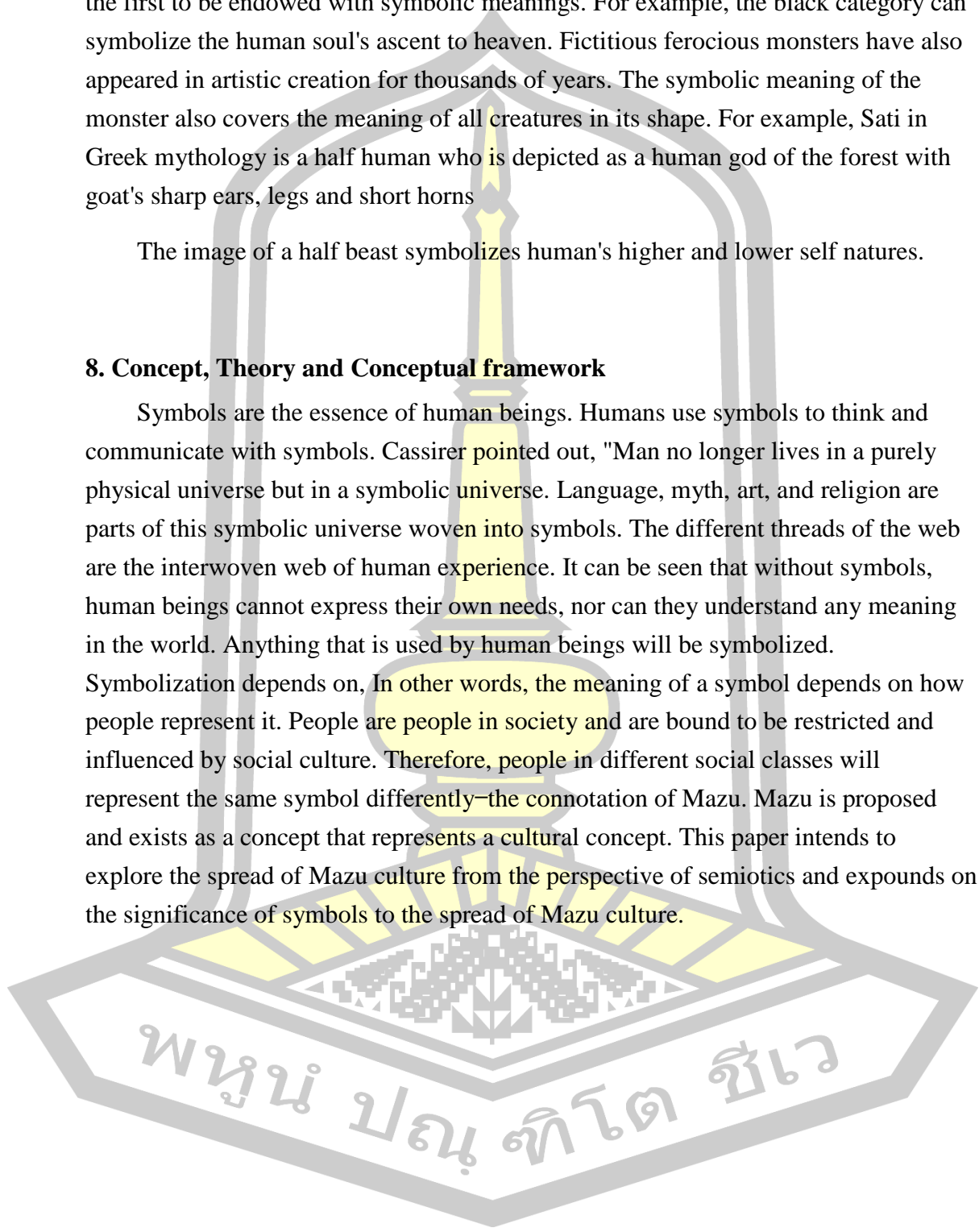
Long ago, our ancestors only used symbolism to describe the universe, prosperity, death, renewal and other things, but the emergence of psychoanalytic therapy theory makes the understanding of ideas and things must be analyzed according to the needs of self and psychology. For example, the shadow can be seen as a symbol of inner insecurity. Everyone has heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood. When we analyze these fairy tales now, you will find that many stories are actually about the experience of human growth, about what obstacles we encounter in the process of growth, and how we mature. However, in most cases, ancient and typical symbols are related to the universe and the relationship between human beings and the universe. Some symbols, such as circles and birds, have recognized specific symbolic meanings.

Among many things, the themes of birth, resurrection and seasons change are the first to be endowed with symbolic meanings. For example, the black category can symbolize the human soul's ascent to heaven. Fictitious ferocious monsters have also appeared in artistic creation for thousands of years. The symbolic meaning of the monster also covers the meaning of all creatures in its shape. For example, Sati in Greek mythology is a half human who is depicted as a human god of the forest with goat's sharp ears, legs and short horns

The image of a half beast symbolizes human's higher and lower self natures.

### **8. Concept, Theory and Conceptual framework**

Symbols are the essence of human beings. Humans use symbols to think and communicate with symbols. Cassirer pointed out, "Man no longer lives in a purely physical universe but in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this symbolic universe woven into symbols. The different threads of the web are the interwoven web of human experience. It can be seen that without symbols, human beings cannot express their own needs, nor can they understand any meaning in the world. Anything that is used by human beings will be symbolized. Symbolization depends on, In other words, the meaning of a symbol depends on how people represent it. People are people in society and are bound to be restricted and influenced by social culture. Therefore, people in different social classes will represent the same symbol differently—the connotation of Mazu. Mazu is proposed and exists as a concept that represents a cultural concept. This paper intends to explore the spread of Mazu culture from the perspective of semiotics and expounds on the significance of symbols to the spread of Mazu culture.



|                             |                                |                       |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Contemporary society</b> |                                |                       |
| <b>Symbolic meaning</b>     | <b>Pattern in Mazu culture</b> | <b>New expression</b> |

*Table 1: The conceptual framework.*  
Source: Drawn by Hui Wang, 2022.

**9. Research plan**

|                                                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Plan work content                                                                         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Collect literature and papers                                                             | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Visiting the countryside and the performance site of the troupe, interviewing key figures |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Organize on-site pictures and interview information                                       |   |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Writing papers                                                                            |   |   | █ | █ | █ | █ |   |   |   |   |
| Revise, adjust and improve the thesis                                                     |   |   |   |   |   | █ | █ |   |   |   |
| Thesis defense                                                                            |   |   |   |   |   |   | █ | █ |   |   |
| Published journals                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | █ | █ |   |
| Graduation                                                                                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | █ |

*Table 2: The research plan.*  
Source: Drawn by Hui Wang, 2022.

## 10. Chapter structure

Chapter I The research proposal

Chapter II The development history of Mazu and the introduction of Mazu culture

The first chapter of Mazu's development process this chapter introduces the general situation of Putian Mazu, summarizes the historical background of Mazu and analyzes its cultural value.

Chapter III The symbolic meanings of patterns in Mazu culture

The second chapter is Mazu culture, which mainly investigates the development process of Mazu culture and analyzes the characteristics of the audience in the process of Mazu culture transmission. This paper classifies Mazu culture according to its symbolic methods and characteristics, discusses the current application of these symbols, and discusses how to innovate or add other symbolic meanings to existing symbols after analyzing the situation of the first two chapters.

Chapter IV The expressions of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society

The third chapter uses the symbols of analysis and classification to analyze the existing products, and puts forward appropriate suggestions to better promote the development and dissemination of Mazu culture.

Chapter V Conclusion, discussion and suggestion

## 11. Benefit of Research

The existing excellent Mazu cultural and creative products are analyzed from the perspective of semiotics to analyze the symbolic meaning of Mazu elements and corroborate them, reflecting the importance of symbols in Mazu cultural and creative products. Discover the meaning and help people to have a correct understanding of Mazu culture for design and creation, and promote people's shared understanding of Mazu culture.

## Chapter II

### The development history of Mazu and the general situation of Mazu culture

Mazu is a god of the sea in the south coast of China. It is believed to bless the safety of the sea and the harvest of fishermen. It is also one of the symbols of maritime career and folk beliefs. The Mazu belief has a long history and originated in Meizhou Island in Fujian. It has spread widely in Taiwan, Guangdong, Hainan, Macao and other places, forming a unique cultural phenomenon.

The prototype of Mazu is Lin Moniang, a girl from a fishing village in southern Fujian during the Tang Dynasty. It is said that she can control the beasts of the dragon palace and rescue fishermen in distress, and is revered as a god of the sea. Later, she was named the "Holy Mother of Heaven" and called "Mazu". The Mazu belief gradually took shape and was incorporated into the official religion during the Song and Yuan dynasties. With the passage of time, Mazu belief has gradually evolved into a folk belief culture in the southern coast of China, which is integrated with local history, geography, humanities and other factors.

Mazu culture has a history of more than one thousand years and is a treasure of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. There have been as many as 16 official honorific titles for Mazu in the past dynasties, and more than 100 folk honorific titles for Mazu. The emperors of all dynasties have praised and titled Mazu as many as 36 times, and the title has as many as 64 characters. There are nearly 10,000 temples of Mazu all over the world, more than 200 million believers in 33 countries, and Mazu is known as the goddess of peace on the sea. **(Ren Qinghua, 2016)** Zhang Kehui, former vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, pointed out: Mazu belief has lasted for a long time, spread widely, has deep connotations, and has deep influence, which is unmatched by other folk worship. In 2009, "Mazu Belief and Custom" was included in the List of Human Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO<sup>4</sup>, becoming the common spiritual wealth of all mankind.

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, referred to as "UNESCO", was established

Mazu culture refers to a characteristic culture that takes Mazu belief as the main theme, takes Mazu palace temples, sacrifices, myths and legends, literature and art as the main carrier, and is derived and integrated with various cultural elements. Its content involves many fields such as politics, economy, society, religion, folklore, architecture, history, literature and art, sports, military affairs, diplomacy, navigation, and immigration.

Any kind of cultural phenomenon can be studied from different angles or aspects. The same is true of Mazu culture. (Anonymous, 1960) Various cultures in history are often connected, collided and infiltrated with each other. Mazu culture has a long history, from the Northern Song Dynasty to the present, as long as thousands of years. Mazu culture involves many disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, political science, education, architecture, statistics, folklore, etc. Some of them are related to language and folklore, some are related to anthropology, and some are related to drama and poetry. Belief activities, and architectural art are related. With the widespread spread of Mazu belief, the cultural connotation it condenses will become richer.

Mazu belief has a prominent position in many folk beliefs on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and around the world. Mazu belief has produced poems, couplets, drama, architecture, folk customs and other cultures that are closely related to it in the development of Mazu belief, especially Confucianism<sup>5</sup>, Taoism<sup>6</sup> and other cultures in China. Buddhist culture and Mazu culture have interpenetrated and influenced each other, making Mazu belief more widely and deeply rooted among the people. (C Fang; L Lijuan, 2020)

### 1. The origin of Mazu

Mazu is a real folk woman in history. Her name is Lin Mo. After her death, she was worshiped as a god by the government and the people. It has been continuously supplemented and perfected by literati and believers in the past dynasties. At present, the document that records information about Mazu is found to be the "Reconstruction of Shunji Temple in Shengdunzu Temple" written by Liao Pengfei, a Jinshi from Xianyou in the Southern Song Dynasty. The goddess of the world's legends. At first,

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on November 16, 1945, with its headquarters in Paris, France, and currently has 195 member states. UNESCO promotes international cooperation among nations in the fields of education, science and culture to build peace. Its main organs include the General Conference, Executive Board and Secretariat.

<sup>5</sup> Confucianism, also known as Confucianism, Confucianism, Confucius and Mencius, Confucianism, is a cultural mainstream thought, philosophy and religious system that originated in China and has influenced and spread to other East Asian cultural circles.

<sup>6</sup> It is an extremely important school of philosophy among the "Hundred Schools of Philosophy", which exists in various cultural fields in China and has had a huge impact on the culture of China and the world.



Lin was a wizard who could predict disasters and fortunes; after her death, everyone built a temple for her in the local area. In 1192, it was written in "Puyang Zhi" that Mazu was a wizard in Lizhong. It can be seen that Mazu was a wizard during her lifetime. **(H Guohua, 2018)**

The concept of witchcraft in Fujian is very popular and has existed for a long time. A wizard is a mysterious person who can use magic or occult powers and possesses supernatural abilities and knowledge. Wizards are often able to predict good and bad luck, expel evil things, remove or treat illnesses, and even catch ghosts, etc. Therefore, in the social culture at that time, wizards were regarded as healers and prophets, worshiped by believers, and even became spiritual leaders. Provide guidance for people's lives. The statement that Mazu was a wizard during her lifetime is quite credible.

“According to literature records, Mazu was born on the 23rd day of the third lunar month in 960 AD and died on the 9th day of the ninth lunar month in 987 A.D. at the age of 28. (It is said that when Mazu rescued a ship in distress at sea, she was unfortunately hit on the head by a mast and fell into the water and died.)” **(H Cheng, 2014)** Since then, Mazu has often appeared, and she often appeared to rescue people when they encountered difficulties. The villagers often saw her in the mountains and rivers. She sits next to the rock, or sits in the clouds, or flies in the sea wearing red clothes. Since then, the villagers have built a temple for her on the peak of Meizhou Island, and worshiped her devoutly. Gradually, the number of Mazu believers is increasing.

## **2. The origin and development of Mazu belief**

After Mazu's death, the local residents of Meizhou Island built a temple to worship her, hoping that Mazu's soul could protect people's production and life safety as before. The change from a witch to a goddess. Twelve years after Mazu's death, that is, in 999 AD, people built a Mazu temple in Pinghaiao, across the sea from Meizhou Island, still exists today. One hundred years after Mazu's death, that is, in 1086, there was another Mazu temple in Ninghai, Hanjiang, Putian - Shengdunzu Temple. At that time, Ninghai Town was close to the coast, and it was a port with prosperous commerce and fishery. It was known as the inner and outer port for the import and export of goods from the north and the south of Putian. The commerce was prosperous, and the belief of Mazu was also spread outward through the port. **(H Ruiguo, 2013)**

The Mazu belief was officially recognized by the government in the fifth year of Xuanhe in the Song Dynasty, that is, in 1123 AD, when Yundi of Geshizhonglu went to Korea as an envoy at the emperor's will. "According to Liao Pengfei's Records on the Reconstruction of Shunji Temple in Shengdun Ancestral Temple: Lu Yundi's mission team encountered wind and waves during the voyage, and many ships collided and sank. Get on the mast of the ship, control the direction of the ship, and finally the ship safely docks. Lu Yundi asked the accompanying staff where the goddess came from, and Bao Yilang Li Zhen (from Ninghai, Putian) who was on the same boat told him that it was Ninghai Shengdun Mazu who appeared to escort. After returning to the imperial court, Lu Yundi reported the facts to the imperial court, so Emperor Huizong of Song Dynasty issued an edict to bestow Ninghai Shengdun Matsu Temple with the name "Shunji". The emperor bestowed the temple title, indicating that Mazu began to be officially recognized and highly valued by the government." (G Jiaying, 2015)

During the Southern Song Dynasty, Mazu belief really got a great development. Because the court of the Southern Song Dynasty was defeated and retreated to the Jiangnan area, and feared that the Jin Dynasty's army would continue to attack the Jiangnan area, it attached great importance to supporting and offering sacrifices to various gods, and fantasized about using the power of the gods to defend the retreated territory. This kind of god praises and praises constantly. During the more than 100 years of the Southern Song Dynasty, the imperial court praised Mazu as many as 14 times.

During the Yuan Dynasty, Mazu belief developed and flourished. The imperial court of the Yuan Dynasty attached great importance to maritime trade, and Quanzhou became an international port. A thriving seafaring enterprise needs a patron saint of the seas. The Yuan Dynasty also attached great importance to water transportation, because the grain output in the north was very low, and the grain of the government and the people needed to be transported to the north by water and sea by boats. It can be said that water transport was the lifeline of the rule of the Yuan Dynasty, and water transport faced many dangers and was unpredictable. Therefore, Mazu was revered as the patron saint of navigation.

In the Ming Dynasty, Mazu belief expanded into new fields. In the early Ming Dynasty, in order to avoid the scourge brought by Japanese pirates, the imperial court implemented a strict sea ban policy, which made the development of Mazu belief enter a low period. In the entire Ming Dynasty, there were only two praises and awards for Mazu. It was not until Ming Chengzu gave up the sea ban policy and sent Zheng He to lead the fleet to the Western Ocean seven times. Because Zheng He

himself believed in Mazu very much, he must worship and worship the statue of Mazu at the bow of the ship every time before sailing. With the fleet of Zheng He's voyages to the west, the faith of Mazu also spread to Guangdong, Taiwan and other places, and gradually spread to foreign countries.

In the Qing Dynasty, Mazu belief was popularized. During this period, Mazu belief spread to all parts of Fujian Province, and Mazu palaces and temples gradually appeared in other provinces.

“Since modern times, especially from 1840 to 1980s, due to the loss of government support, Mazu belief tended to decline. Especially during the "Cultural Revolution", almost all Mazu palaces and temples in the country were destroyed, and the belief in Mazu was seriously hindered.” (R Qinghua, 2016)

Since the reform and opening up, Mazu belief has been supported by people's governments at all levels, and the number of believers has increased significantly. There has been an upsurge of Mazu belief on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and even around the world, and Mazu belief has shown a momentum of rapid development.

### 3. The legends of Mazu

The evolution of Mazu from man to god has gone through a long historical period. Mazu is the god of the sea. Since Mazu was enshrined by people as the god of navigation protection and had the function of commanding the world, the old river gods and sea gods in ancient China have been popular among people. In my mind, they all took a back seat and were replaced by Mazu. History chose Mazu as the nautical god who symbolizes people's desire and belief to conquer the ocean, because Mazu was covered with many mythological colors from birth.

Myths and legends are produced on a certain basis of reality, so although they are illusory, they are after all a reflection of reality. Moreover, the characters in myths and legends are mostly legends or heroes in a certain area in a certain era. After people's reasonable fantasy and artistic processing, they have become gods in people's minds with power beyond the human world. From birth to death, Mazu has many vivid and magical legends. These legends have many strong "man-made gods" properties, and also reflect some aspects of politics, economy, culture and other aspects of this era. From the lines in every story in the myths and legends, it can be seen that Mazu has done many good things for people in her life, which shows her noble qualities of self-sacrifice and selfless dedication, and also reveals the origins of these myths and legends from various aspects. Here are a few key legends. (H Ruiguo, 2013)

Mazu was born. Mazu's father Lin Yuan and mother Wang Shi. The parents have done many good deeds. When the father was in his 40s, he had already given birth to 1 son and 5 daughters. He often worried that only 1 son was too small to ensure the succession of the family. He often burned incense and worshiped Buddha to pray for another son. Mazu's parents were very pious and moved Guanyin of the South China Sea. One night, Wang dreamed that Avalokitesvara said to her: "Your family has done good deeds, and I will give you a pill today. It will be beneficial if you take it." As expected, she became pregnant soon. Then there was the birth of Mazu. **(X Ming, 2009)**

Mazu saves her father and finds her brother. In autumn and September, one day, Mazu's father and elder brother sailed across the sea to the north. At that time, the westerly wind was strong and there was a strong wind and rough sea. The father and son's sailboat was tossed about by the strong wind and rough sea, and the situation was critical. At that time, Mazu was weaving at home, when she leaned on the loom and closed her eyes, her face suddenly changed. Grasping the shuttle with one hand and the stick with the other, stepping on the machine shaft tightly with both feet, struggling to support with all your might, for fear of losing something. Her mother was startled when she saw it and hurried to wake her up. Mazu missed and dropped the shuttle to the ground. Weeping and saying: "My father was saved, but my elder brother fell into the sea and drowned." Sure enough, someone came to report, and what Mazu said was consistent with the facts. At that time, when Mazu closed her eyes, she was stepping on her father's boat and holding on to her elder brother's rudder. Her mother woke her up, and when the shuttle fell to the ground, her elder brother's boat capsized. Overwhelmed by the waves. Mazu accompanied her mother and sister-in-law to search for her brother's body by boat. At that time, the sea was rough, and they suddenly found a group of aquariums gathered on the surface of the sea, and everyone became frightened. Mazu said not to be afraid, and told the Shui people not to welcome them. Suddenly the water became clear, and her brother's body had surfaced. Only then did everyone know that it was the water god who had come to protect his brother's body. Finally, the brother's body was carried back. Afterwards, whenever it was Mazu's birthday, many fish would gather in groups in the middle of the night and gather in front of Meizhou Island, as if dancing, and they would not disperse until dawn. It is said to still be the case today. On this day, fishermen do not go to sea to fish. **(R Qinghua, 2016)**

Mazu prayed for rain to help the people. When Mazu was 21 years old, there was a severe drought in Putian. The water dried up and the trees died. The farmers asked for help. All the folks in the county said that only Mazu can save this disaster. The county magistrate went to pray to Mazu himself, and Mazu immediately prayed for

rain, saying that it would rain heavily at a certain moment. On that day, the sun was still scorching at noon, and there were no clouds in the sky. The county magistrate said, did Mazu's prophecy fail? Not long after, the clouds were overcast, the rain was torrential, and the water rose three feet on the ground. The masses had rain and had a good harvest. Take the initiative to cheer and be grateful together during the social drama performances, and praise Mazu's boundless merits.

Mazu begged to get rid of illness. One year, the Putian plague was prevalent, and the entire family of the county magistrate also fell ill. Someone told the county magistrate that Mazu on Meizhou Island has great powers and can bring the dead back to life and provide disaster relief. The county magistrate personally came to the door to ask for help, and said earnestly: "I have traveled thousands of miles to be an official, and my whole family is in Putian. Now my life and death depend on Mazu. I hope I can take pity on his family." He repents. Tell him to drink flagleaf, decoct water, and stick the charm she wrote on the door. The county magistrate followed her instructions, and the illness was cured very quickly. The county magistrate was so grateful that the whole family came to thank the savior. Since then, he has become famous.

Mazu ascension to heaven on Meizhou island. In the fourth year of Song Yongxi (987), Mazu was 28 years old. On the day before the Double Ninth Festival. Mazu said to her family: "I like to be clean, and I don't want to live in the world forever. Tomorrow is the Double Ninth Festival, and I want to climb mountains. I will say goodbye to you in advance." Everyone thought she was just climbing mountains to see the scenery, but they didn't know that she was going to become a fairy. . The next morning, after burning incense and chanting sutras, Mazu said to her sisters: "Today I am going to travel far and wide to realize my usual wish, but the road is rugged and far away, and you cannot come with me. How sad it is! The sisters didn't understand what she meant, so they smiled and comforted her and said, "Just go swimming, why talk so much!" Mazu said goodbye to her sisters and climbed to the highest peak of Meizhou Island. At this time, the top of the mountain was covered with dense clouds, and a stream of white air rushed into the sky, as if hearing the fairy music played by silk and bamboo orchestras in the sky, resounding through the sky, I saw the rainbow shining in the sky, and Mazu was riding the clouds, soaring leisurely in the sky middle. The residents of Meizhou Island were amazed when they saw it. And Mazu hovers in the clouds, looking down at the world, looming. Suddenly the colorful clouds merged together and then disappeared. Since then, Mazu often came out to appear. Folks can often see her sitting next to rocks or springs on mountains, or sitting cross-legged among colorful clouds and mists, or flying over the sea in red. Rescue people in need, protect the country and protect the people. So people in the village

built ancestral halls and temples on the peaks of Meizhou Island to worship Mazu devoutly. Later generations came to worship in an endless stream. (H Ruiguo, 2013)

The myths and legends of Mazu are extensive in content, magical and supernatural, and are an important part of Chinese folk culture. In terms of content, it can be roughly divided into four aspects. One, about Mazu's life experience, including birth, immortality, death and so on. This type of legend has a strong witchcraft or Buddhist color, endowing Mazu with the attributes of a god. Second, it is the story of Mazu saving lives at sea and helping others. This kind of theme is the main part of the legend of Mazu, which reflects Mazu's honest and benevolent character of doing good to help the world, and also expresses people's good wishes to get rid of suffering. This type of legend is well known to women and children and has a wide range of spread. Third, it is the legend of Mazu's conquest of demons. These legendary demons and ghosts symbolize the difficulties and obstacles in the natural world and the evil forces of society that people face. (H Xiulin, 2012) Mazu is not afraid of violence, and promotes good and suppresses evil. It not only shows people's fighting spirit to conquer nature and the meaning of unyielding resistance to social evil forces, but also reflects that ancient laborers were confused and helpless by the incomparable power of nature, so they sought gods The psychology of belief in shelter. Fourth, it is the myth of Mazu protecting the imperial envoys, water transportation, and assisting in fighting against the enemy. These legends are closely related to the historical events and figures of various dynasties and have certain historical significance.

#### 4. Mazu's spirit

Where there is Mazu belief, there is Mazu spirit. The spirit of Mazu is a concentrated expression of the noble behavior, noble emotion and noble morality shown in Mazu's life and legends. It is a moral system recognized and respected by the people and officials of all ages.

##### 4.1 The connotation of Mazu's spirit

In contemporary times, the spirit of Mazu is generally summarized as virtue, good deeds, and great love.

Lide refers to helping the poor and helping those in danger. People are full of longing for a happy life, making continuous efforts and striving hard. Nature is full of unknown, strange and magical characteristics, which makes people full of awe of it. In such an environment, human beings long for a kind of spiritual support and spiritual comfort. Whether it is at sea or on land, whether it is flood or drought, whether it is at home or abroad, whether it is defending against enemies or hunting

down thieves, when you encounter emergencies and difficult situations, you can always pray for Mazu's blessings, and you will always be able to turn bad luck into good luck and stay safe. Get over it. Mazu's virtue transcended the limitations of the world and became the highest example of human morality. (C Zuying, 2020)

Doing good deeds means helping others with kindness. In the belief of Mazu, good deeds must be rewarded with good deeds, and it is hoped that people's thoughts will be touched and awakened through spiritual power. Mazu used her countless stories of doing good deeds to get good luck to explain a philosophy: the premise for people to be happy is to have a kind heart and behavior. As long as people do more good deeds, they will get help from others and be happy. As long as we help each other, the world can prosper.

Great love refers to maternal love in general. Mazu itself is an image of an amiable, respectable, kind and graceful mother. Although the emperors of the past dynasties have continued to confer titles on Mazu, from wife, concubine, concubine to Tianhou, the common people still affectionately call her Niangma and Mazu, because people yearn for the most loving and direct protection like a mother.

Mazu's love is firstly manifested in the wide range of objects. In the legend of Mazu, there are stories about Mazu's love for her relatives, such as the story of Mazu rescuing her father and elder brother at sea. This expresses Mazu's spirit of filial piety to parents. In Chinese traditional morality, filial piety is an extremely important position. In addition, there are stories about Mazu rescuing merchants who were shipwrecked in the past, expressing Mazu's broad love. Mazu's love is sincere and selfless. The spirit of Mazu and related legends are widely spread among the people. (L Yuhao, 2017)

#### 4.2 The composition of Mazu spirit

The original starting point of the Mazu spirit is that Lin Mo's touching deeds have been recognized by the society. As an ordinary folk woman, the reason why Lin Mo can become a god is that her touching behavior and the noble morality she embodies are generally recognized by the people and widely praised. At the same time, Mazu also has many excellent qualities. (L Lijuan, 2009) First of all, according to historical records, Mazu was smart and hardworking. She began to study Taoism and Buddhist classics at the age of 9, and she had a strong comprehension. Secondly, Mazu is compassionate and kind, and does everything she can to help others, even at the expense of her own life. Furthermore, Mazu not only showed filial piety to her parents and gave benevolence to her fellow villagers, but also dedicated this benevolence to many strangers. In the end, Mazu was brave and strong. No matter

facing the endless sea or the villains who did evil, Mazu showed a spirit of daring to fight.

The Mazu's spirit can be enriched and developed without the expectation and entrustment of the people to Mazu. Mazu was able to realize the transformation from a human being to a god. The key step was that Mazu's deeds were recognized and praised by the people. Therefore, the people began the process of deifying Mazu. In this process, in addition to the moral connotation of Mazu's noble behavior before her death was deified, the people also deified certain social, spiritual or natural phenomena related to Mazu after her death. This interpretation entrusts the people's active prayer, expectation and spiritual entrustment to Mazu in the struggle with nature, the struggle for social survival, and the coordination of interpersonal relationships.

In the Song Dynasty, although the economy, education, and culture of the Xinghua Army had developed, internal and external troubles were still serious. Coupled with the frequent occurrence of natural disasters, the prevalence of plague, and the constant harassment of thieves and pirates, people were unable to resist natural and man-made disasters. Reluctantly can only pray for the blessing of the gods. Many legends about Mazu entrust the expectations and spiritual sustenance of the people. Mazu is anxious about what others need, and she responds to every request, and her integrity is effective. (Q Jinliang, 1999) At the same time, Mazu's virtues are convincing, harmonious and tolerant. When dealing with many evil forces, Mazu did not take the method of direct elimination, but also adopted the method of subjugation or subjugation, which reflects Mazu's virtue and is more loved by everyone.

Mazu belief has gradually developed throughout the country since the Song Dynasty, and spread overseas with the footsteps of the Chinese. Among them, sailors, fishermen, merchants at sea, and overseas Chinese are not only believers in Mazu spirit, but also direct beneficiaries of Mazu spirit. Wherever overseas Chinese live together, there is Mazu belief. Mazu has become a veritable protector of the sea.

The spirit of Mazu is also full of official expectations and appeals to Mazu. Mazu came to the altar from the folk. She not only won the psychological recognition of the people, but also received great praise from the officials of the past dynasties. This is a very peculiar phenomenon in the history of the development of Chinese folk beliefs. The higher and higher standards of praise and rewards for Mazu in successive dynasties reflect the irreplaceable role of Mazu as the god of the sea, and the exemplary role of Mazu spirit in advocating social morality, and it is because the



government sees that Mazu spirit is restraining people behavior, promoting social harmony, advancing national unity, and consolidating state power.(S Xuemei, 2016)

The belief in Mazu has been endless for thousands of years, and its foundation is the spirit of Mazu. The Mazu culture with the Mazu spirit as the core of belief is an important part of traditional Chinese culture, and Chinese culture is the inexhaustible driving force for the Chinese nation to thrive and unite and forge ahead. Practice has important positive significance.

The spirit of Mazu is the banner of self-cultivation and improvement of personal humanistic quality. All living beings working hard in the market economy are inevitably restless psychologically, and it is difficult to resist the temptation of fame and fortune. But a person's life is very short. If one can maintain a kind heart, do as many good deeds as possible, sacrifice oneself for others, help others, and inherit Mazu's traditional virtues of kindness and simplicity. Obeying discipline and law, working hard, honoring righteousness and keeping promises, and subordinating personal interests to the interests of the public are also the meaning of life. If everyone can be guided by the spirit of Mazu, the construction of social spiritual civilization will be easily promoted.

The spirit of Mazu is the spiritual pillar for the harmonious coexistence of rural Mazu belief communities. The modern concept of Mazu as the god of the sea has gradually faded out of people's lives, and in many rural areas along the eastern coast, villagers may not be able to accurately summarize the connotation of Mazu's spirit, but the position of Mazu's "mother" in their hearts is very clear and cannot be violated. The villagers express the simple moral consciousness of the Mazu belief area through the ceremony of Mazu's parade around the border to keep safe. increasingly prominent.

The spirit of Mazu is the spiritual link between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and world peace. Today's Mazu believers pay homage to Mazu not only for disaster relief and blessing, but also for spiritual nostalgia and cuddling, and the traceability of culture. Advocating and carrying forward the spirit of Mazu, its positive role is to guide people to be kind, do good, love home, love hometown, patriotism, put the national righteousness first, enhance the identity and cohesion of the nation and the country, and contribute to the construction of regional peace and world peace Unite all forces that can be united.

## 5. Beliefs and Customs of Mazu as the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in the World

On September 30, 2009, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO decided to include the "Mazu Belief and Custom" nominated by the Chinese government in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. (W Xiaosheng, 2017) This is China's first world-class heritage of belief and customs, and also the first heritage in Fujian Province to be selected as a world-class heritage, marking that Mazu culture has officially become a common cultural heritage of all mankind. Mazu's belief and custom is a folk culture that worships and praises Mazu's spirit of "virtue, good deeds, and great love" as the core, takes Mazu's palace temple as the place, and expresses temple fairs, customs and legends. Composed of stories and legends.

### 5.1 The sacrifice ceremony of Mazu

After Mazu dedicated her life to rescue the shipwreck, the people of Meizhou built temples for her to worship and worship. It is also constantly evolving.

In the fifth year of Xuanhe in the Song Dynasty (1123), the imperial court bestowed a plaque on the Mazu Temple for the first time, marking the government's recognition of the Mazu belief, and since then included her in the national sacrificial system. Since the Song Dynasty, the emperors of all dynasties have not only praised and rewarded Mazu frequently, but also promulgated sacrifices by the court. In the Yuan Dynasty, the imperial court sent ministers to Meizhou to worship Mazu three times on behalf of the emperor. During the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty, the emperor's sacrificial ceremony was held in Tianfei Palace in Nanjing, presided over by the minister of Taichang Temple, and equipped with music, singing and dancing. After Kangxi unified Taiwan in the Qing Dynasty, he sent courtiers to Meizhou to worship Mazu many times. In the Qing Dynasty, Yongzheng issued an order to re-enable the ritual of three kneeling and nine knocking. In the Qing Dynasty, Mazu became one of the three gods whose sacrificial ceremonies were held by the state, namely the Yellow Emperor, Confucius and Mazu. (Y Pengfei, 2012)

The age of folk sacrifices to Mazu is more than 100 years earlier than the age of official sacrifices to Mazu. Mazu's sacrificial activities have their own unique methods and contents. The methods and contents of worshipping Mazu are roughly the same in all temples that worship Mazu. Among them, the Mazu Temple in Meizhou Island, Putian is the most typical.

The sacrificial activities of Mazu include the main forms of activities, festival celebrations, returning to her natal home, poems, Mazu scriptures, sacrificial utensils and ceremonies, and related folk customs.

Sacrificing to Mazu is one of the most important activities of Mazu belief. The main groups of folk worshipping Mazu are fishermen and boatmen. Offering marine products to Mazu is a characteristic of fishermen. Some rare large clam shells, conch shells, and large lobster shells are displayed as offerings for many years. Flour is also used to steam various offerings symbolizing the aquarium or other mythical beasts during various festivals and celebrations. There are also a large number of ship models hidden in many palaces, which are offerings to Mazu by navigators and boatmen. One is to pray for the protection of Mazu for the ship; the other is to consult Mazu's wishes before starting shipbuilding. Among the offerings of Mazu, there are often various embroidered shoes, called "Mazu shoes", to express the prayer to Mazu for a child. **(Z Jinyan, 2013)**

The shrines, offering tables and candlesticks, incense burners, bells, drums and other sacrificial utensils in Mazu temples are all cultural relics of Mazu belief. The lacquer gold woodcuts in Putian area are exquisite in technique and beautiful in design, and are generally used in the shrines of Mazu temples in this area. The production of the offering table is not only exquisite in carving, but also ingenious in shape conception, and the golden light is shining, which is dazzling. **(Z Jinyan, 2013)** As for the various sacrificial utensils dedicated to Mazu, such as candlesticks, fruit plates, food plates, etc., they are all treasures of lacquered wood carvings. In these palaces and temples, the statues of Mazu are also extremely ornately decorated, including carefully carved silver crowns, copper crowns, colorful dragon robes, Xiapei, shoes inlaid with beads, court beads, and jade kui.

Among the folk cultural relics of Mazu's belief, the largest number and the richest variety are the complete set of ceremonial utensils used by Mazu when traveling, that is, flags, props, signs, etc. held at the front of the parade. Among them are Qingdao flags with embroidered characters, flowers, and dragon and tiger patterns. There are knives, signs for exorcising monsters, dragon head sticks, and plaques with the title of "Holy Virgin". In addition, there are large and small lanterns, firecrackers and other utensils. Whenever Mazu goes on tour or pays homage to ancestors, these ceremonial utensils will be held by various characters dressed in different positions, or carried on their shoulders. Arranging according to a certain order and rules, shouting at the front and hugging at the back, is a great display of Mazu's folk cultural relics.

People's belief activities for Mazu generally fall into three categories: one is Dajiao, which is the commemoration of the big celebration; the other is Qingjiao, which is the annual commemoration;

The commemorative activities of the big celebration include the completion ceremony of the Mazu Temple and the Millennium Festival. According to the tradition of Buddhism, after the completion of temples, pagodas and Buddha statues, a ceremony should be held on a suitable day to express the meaning of enshrining and dwelling. At this time, five gongs and drums must be played in the ancestral temple, guns fired, puppet shows, Puxian operas and so on. When acting, it is stipulated that the opening scene must be performed first, and then the program can be officially started. In the ancestral temple, nine sutra-chanting masters and nine monks each will be invited to perform the ceremony, and the sutra-chanting masters and monks must also be equipped with their own drummers to play. All in all, the whole celebration is large in scale and grand in form.

A perennial commemoration. The main events are Mazu's birthday on the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, and the commemoration of Mazu's ascension to heaven on the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar. In addition, there are Mazu Lantern Festival and the 15th day of the eighth lunar month to celebrate the birthday of the Chinese Army. The Chinese Army is under Mazu, so the celebrations are only held in the Chinese Army Hall. **(Z Ningning, 2019)**

The official day of Mazu Lantern Festival is the tenth day of the first lunar month. On this festival, people respectfully invite Mazu to celebrate the Lantern Festival. On Meizhou Island, in addition to the ancestral temple, there are 15 other Mazu palaces and temples dedicated to Mazu. Therefore, the activities to celebrate the Lantern Festival start from the eighth day to the eighteenth day of the first lunar month. The statues of Mazu from other palaces and temples were successively brought to the ancestral temple to offer incense. The guards of honor accompanying the temples have big flags, big lanterns, big blowing drums, and firing guns. The blessings of the palaces and temples preside over the offering of incense. The ancestral temple invites Taoist priests to perform the ceremony. The offerings are provided by the believers who usually pray and make wishes in return for the sacrifice. According to the usual practice, during the Lantern Festival activities, the statue of Mazu will be carried from the Shanwei Palace to the ancestral temple to celebrate the Lantern Festival, and then go out to celebrate the Lantern Festival. There are spectacular and lively entertainment performances such as placing brown sedan chairs and playing knife sedan chairs, as well as activities such as Mazu going out of the palace and returning to the palace.

Mazu's birthday commemoration. The 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar is the anniversary of Mazu's birth. This celebration is the most lively, even more grand than the Spring Festival. Celebrations start from the fifth day of March to the twenty-third day. On the 23rd of March, the ancestral temple officially held a celebration ceremony. Starting from the night of the 22nd, the guns were fired first, followed by the ceremony. The offerings in the temple include whole pigs, whole sheep, whole chickens, whole geese, and seafood. Five soups are made with dried longan, gorgon, lotus seeds, red dates and dried persimmons. There are also ten kinds of dry goods, colored with white beans, arranged in ten kinds of patterns and characters, and placed in ten small bowls. (Z Beibei, 2014)

The commemoration of Mazu's ascension to heaven on the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar is characterized by abstinence from meat and meat, and all offerings are vegetarian. Fasting is carried out in the ancestral temple, and performances are performed from the sixth day to the ninth day of September.

The Mazu Ancestral Temple in Meizhou is the birthplace of Mazu's belief and customs. Mazu's sacrificial activities are of high standard and prominent status. In 1994, referring to historical data and folk sacrificial ceremonies, the "Meizhou Ancestral Temple Ceremony" was formulated. In 2006, the "Meizhou Mazu Ceremony" was included in the national "Intangible Cultural Heritage List". In 2009, "Mazu Belief and Custom" was included in the "Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" by UNESCO, and the ceremony is an important part of it. The Meizhou Mazu Ancestral Temple Ceremony takes 45 minutes and has strict regulations.

Mazu's outing is a kind of activity ceremony in Meizhou to pray for Mazu's blessings and safety. At present, Mazu is invited to tour the whole territory to drive out demons, sweep away bad things, and protect the safety and prosperity of local people. This kind of outing is not necessarily held every year, and the date of the outing is not fixed. Every year on the first day of the second month of the lunar calendar, which is also the "head tooth" custom in Meizhou Island, people will divination and divination in front of the statue of Mazu to pray for peace. If the result of divination is disagreement, it will be decided that Mazu will travel. At this time, the old people with status and reputation in the village will gather at the ancestral temple to decide the host to travel, and then determine the month of travel through divination, and then the specific date will be calculated by a special mage. On the day of the trip, all the Mazus of the 15 palaces and ancestral temples in Meizhou were carried out for a tour, and they were stipulated to stay in Xiashan Palace for one day. After traveling,

divination determines the time when Mazu will return to the ancestral temple. (S Maocai, 2016)

Mazu's separation is a ceremony where the person in charge of a Mazu temple in other places goes to the Mazu temple in Meizhou to invite incense. It is usually called "separation of spirits" or "separation of spirits". Generally, when there are celebrations or festivals in Mazu temples in other places, devout believers, no matter how far or near, make a special trip to the Mazu temple, and ask Mazu to come to the local Mazu temple for guidance and blessings. Afterwards, the "incense" will stay in the local area and will not be sent back to the ancestral temple. Mazu's spirit separation ceremony is often held in Meizhou Zu Temple, sometimes as many as dozens of times a day, especially on the 23rd of March every year when Mazu's birthday is the most. (Z Jinyan, 2013)

With the continuous spread of Mazu culture, the craftsmanship of Mazu offerings in Mazu Temple has also spread to all parts of the world. At present, there are nearly 10,000 Mazu sub-sacred temples around the world. In addition to being affected by the new crown epidemic in 2019, a large number of believers visit the ancestral temples every year to see the crafts of Mazu offerings and learn how to make them. Therefore, the art of making Mazu offerings has become an integral part of Mazu culture.

The production process of Mazu offerings includes material selection, shaping, seasoning, cooking, plattering, and decoration. Generally, local materials are used, with seafood, starch and flour produced in Meizhou as the main raw materials. Modeling is one of the highest technical content in the production process, including carving, kneading, painting and so on. The artistic features of Mazu offerings are remarkable, and the patterns have the characteristics of local culture. They are the concentrated expression of the wisdom and craftsmanship of craftsmen, and have strong cultural and artistic value.

The production of Mazu offerings has evolved and developed for more than a thousand years. At present, it basically follows the specifications established by the Mazu Temple in Meizhou during the most prosperous period of traditional society during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty. There are two types of meat products and vegetarian products, including seafood. There are 114 kinds of noodles, 36 kinds of noodle products, and 24 kinds of vegetarian dishes, a total of 174 kinds. All kinds of offerings have specific names, or come from historical stories, or from Puxian dramas, or from Taoist scriptures, or from old folk customs, etc., all of which contain profound content and meaning of traditional culture. In the process of continuous inheritance and evolution, it highlights the characteristics of the perfect

combination of Mazu culture and food culture, the characteristics of the combination of Meizhou local culture and marine culture, and the close relationship between folk crafts and folk beliefs. The characteristic of the unity of God and man in which man and God coexist harmoniously reflects the characteristics of the integration and development of traditional culture and modern culture. **(R Qinghua, 2016)**

## 5.2 Folk customs

With the extensive process of Mazu's legend in the folk, Mazu's beliefs and customs, as well as Mazu's deeds and virtues, have gradually been absorbed by the folk, integrated with local culture, evolved into folk customs, and formed many customs. Some important customs are listed below in detail.

Fishing is prohibited on Mazu's birthday. Every year, within a few days before and after Mazu's birthday on the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, fishermen are not allowed to go fishing or fish in the sea. Fishermen believe that the dragon king in the sea will come to pay homage to Mazu in the next few days. The tide is rough and the wind is high and the waves are rough. According to the investigation, during the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, many aquariums in the waters around Meizhou Island will lay eggs and reproduce without fishing or fishing. The idea of living in harmony with nature.

Dress customs. Most middle-aged and elderly women in Meizhou Island often wear a pair of special outer pants, the upper half of which is red and the lower half is black or blue. It is said that this is an imitation of Mazu's costume. According to the legends of Mazu, when Mazu appears, she wears red clothes. Therefore, the women of Meizhou Island imitate Mazu, hoping to commemorate Mazu, feel sacred, and convey respect for Mazu. But Mazu is a god and can wear all red, but the world is a layman, so he can only choose a section of red. The lower half of the trousers is black or blue because they live by the sea, and the locals often need to work in the sea. The lower half of the trousers will be soaked and soaked by sea water from time to time, so they appear black or dark. Therefore, the design of Mazu's clothing is that the upper body of the clothes is designed with the blue of the sea as the main color, the upper half of the trousers is red, and the lower half is blue or black. This is a color element extracted from life, a fusion of people's living habits and belief culture, and an important cultural connotation of Mazu's clothing. **(L Ni, 2020)**

Sailing bun. Because the traditional habit of Meizhou Island is that men go out to sea to fish, and women do housework at home. Before going out to sea, they will pray at home to Mazu to bless the people who go out to sea and return safely. After the man returns, he will worship and thank Mazu. In order to pray for Mazu to bless the safety of those who go to sea, women in Meizhou Island, especially middle-aged and

elderly women, will comb their hairstyles into the shape of sails. That is to say, the hair is coiled up in the middle and back of the head, and combed into a bun that is more than ten centimeters high and erected in a semi-curved shape like a sail. Mazu's sailing bun is mainly characterized by the shape of the sail, implying that Mazu's heart is attached to the sea and dedicated to the sea, which symbolizes smooth sailing, so it is commonly known as "sailing head". This kind of sail-shaped bun is clamped with a clip, and there is a wavy hairpin on each side, representing the oars on the boat; a round bun on the top, representing the rudder; a red rope is interspersed with the hairpin. Inside the bun, it represents the cable on the ship; a silver hairpin goes through the bun horizontally, representing the anchor on the ship. The combination of the main components on these ships represents the whole ship, implying smooth sailing. **(L Chunrong, 2006)**

Believers of Mazu will paste yellow paper with pictures of Mazu statues and scriptures on the gates of their homes. Some people will also use Mazu charms carved on wood boards to drive away evil spirits and pray for Mazu to bless the whole family.

When fishing boats in the Putian area go to sea, they often hang a straw mat on the mast to bless the wind and the water. It is recorded in "Tianhou Xianshenglu" that once, Mazu wanted to cross the river and sea in a small boat. Unfortunately, there were no sails and oars on board, and the boatman was afraid to go out because of the rough sea. Mazu said, it doesn't matter, you can use straw mats instead of sails, so she asked someone to hang the straw mats on the end of the mast, and set sail to sea, which was fast and smooth. This is a custom changed from the ancient Mazu legend. **(Y Pengfei, 2012)**

Among the folks in Putian, parents often go to palaces and temples to pray for sachets for their children, so that they can wear them with them, so as to keep them safe and free from evil spirits. This kind of sachet is made of cloth, 6 square bags inside, the front is red, with Tai Chi gossip embroidered in the middle, and the four characters "Meizhou Mazu" embroidered in the gaps in the four corners of the front. The back is grass green, with a red flower embroidered in the middle of the back, and a piece of red cloth is added to cover one third of the back, with the words "Our Lady of Heaven" embroidered on it. **(H Ruiguo, 2013)** The sachet can contain yellow paper and incense ash printed with the statue of Mazu and scriptures, and a buttonhole can be pierced on the front edge for threading and hanging.

The custom of launching new boats and ship models in Meizhou. People in Meizhou Island have lived on fishing for generations, and fishing boats are the main means of production. The whole body of the finished fishing boat is painted white,



with two giant eyes painted on both sides of the bow, and two green dragons painted on the left and right sides of the boat. Before the new boat is launched, a certain ceremony must be held. The owner of the boat must enshrine the statue of Mazu on the boat as usual, offer offerings, fruit boxes, wine, light incense candles, celebrate and pray for blessings. At the same time, the blood taken from the rooster's comb should be prepared in advance to describe the two giant eyes on the bow and the eyes of the green dragon on the left and right sides of the ship. Its function is to make fishermen feel psychologically that they are escorted by Mazu and have dragon eyes to help guide the route, so that they will not be afraid of wind and waves and lose their way when sailing at sea. Before the new boat is launched, an identical model of the fishing boat must be made and enshrined in the Mazu Temple. Only with Mazu's protection can it be safe. The models of various ships preserved in the Mazu Temple over the years have become very precious material materials for studying the history of ancient shipbuilding. (**The Board of Directors of Meizhou Mazu Ancestral Temple, 2011**)

On the Dragon Boat Festival, Putian often holds dragon boat races, which are different from the national dragon boat races to commemorate Qu Yuan. On the dragon boats made in Putian, the flag of "Our Lady of Heaven" must be hoisted, and the statue of Mazu must be placed on the boat. This is because the dragon is the king of water, which can not only drive away evil spirits, but also protect the safety of the dragon boat to avoid accidents.

At the end of the Qing Dynasty, Wang Yatu, a native of Putian, opened a restaurant in Putian City. Every year on the 23rd day of the third month of the lunar calendar, Mazu's birthday, and the ninth day of September, Mazu's Ascension Day, he would provide sacrificial supplies and dishes for Mazu's banquet to Wenfeng Palace. When it came to his fourth-generation successor, Wang Wenji, he refined and developed the original Mazu dishes and made 36 exquisite dishes, which were respectfully placed on the altar table in the main hall of the Mazu Temple. In August 2002, the Organizing Committee of the Taiwan Food Show awarded Wang Wenji the highest award in Taiwan's catering industry "Chinese Food Special Award". (**Y Rongmin, 2007**)

Mazu cake is also a favorite cake of Putian people. A square with a side length of 6 centimeters and a thickness of about 2 centimeters, each piece of Mazu cake is wrapped in soft white paper, and the words "Mazu cake" and "Happiness and Peace" are printed with vermilion marks. (**Z Mei, 2015**)

Mazu noodles are generally used by Putian people to receive distinguished guests. The main ingredients are fine white noodles, full-grained peanuts, shiitake

mushrooms, dried day lily, farm eggs or duck eggs, freshly baked fried tofu, fresh pork belly and high-quality dried seaweed, etc.

In addition, there are folk customs of Mazu entertainment, such as placing brown sedan chairs, playing with knife sedan chairs, parading Mazu's golden body in Meizhou Ancestral Temple, Mazu returning to her natal home, divination and asking divination and other folk customs.

In short, Mazu belief is a kind of social psychology, which is people's admiration, reverence, or some kind of wish for Mazu, a sea god (in fact, Mazu himself). With the needs of social psychology, the connotation of belief has been gradually developed and expanded. From the perspective of religion, Mazu belief belongs to the category of folk beliefs, and it has the colors of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and witchcraft. But different from religious belief, it basically belongs to the category of natural god worship. The essence and vitality of Mazu belief lies in folk customs. Many folk activities come from theaters imitating the ancients, commemorating the etiquette and customs of the ancients, or originating from myths and legends. However, after a long period of transmission, these folk customs are endowed with a strong national flavor and rich and beautiful cultural content, which is worthy of careful study and cooperation. **(Z Feifan, 2020)**

On the carriers attached to these Mazu cultures, in addition to the contents of written records, physical objects, such as Mazu statues, clothing, Mazu offerings, sacrificial utensils, and Mazu palace buildings, etc., are inseparable from the conception and production of patterns. These patterns contain the wisdom of people at that time, extract elements from life, and then refine and sublimate to form specific graphic symbols with symbolic meaning. Its purpose is not only for decoration, but also to convey the spiritual connotation of Mazu belief and build a bridge of communication between God and man. After long-term development, years of accumulation, and the verification of people's life experience, they finally reached a consensus. The patterns in Mazu culture are rich in cultural value and symbolic meaning, which is worthy of our further study and reference in modern society. It can help modern people better understand Mazu belief, understand the connotation of Mazu culture, and better spread and develop Mazu culture.

## Chapter III

### The symbolic meaning of patterns in Mazu culture

The patterns in Mazu culture have various symbolic meanings, they represent the power of the ocean, the safety of navigation and the blessing of people. These patterns are often based on elements such as the image of Mazu, fish, boats, blue and red, waves and ripples, and are presented through straw weaving and embroidery techniques to convey the core values of Mazu culture and the meaning of blessing. These patterns are widely used in Mazu temples, ships, sacrificial ceremonies and other occasions, showing people's awe and dependence on the ocean and navigation, as well as worship and belief in Mazu.

#### 1. Interpretation of semiotic concepts

A symbol is an expression unit of language, non-language and thought, a carrier of meaning, and a representative of the basic elements of human spiritual and material structures. In human daily life and work, it may be necessary to identify and understand different information at any time, and the material carrier of this information is the symbol. It can be said that symbols are the bridge and medium of communication between people and between people and the material world. (Hawkes, 1997)

Human language is the most typical symbol. It is one of the means for human beings to observe and grasp the world. Act on the spiritual world of human beings. Linguistic symbols are used to refer to and express the objects of human perception, and have a descriptive function. They can be used to name or refer to certain characteristics of real things, thereby expressing the meaning of things.

In the process of creating symbols and developing thinking, human beings not only produce language symbols, but also form a symbol system of different perceptual things such as behavioral symbols and visual symbols. Whether it is a language symbol, a behavior, or a visual symbol, it can represent or refer to another thing. For example, the power icon on the mobile phone can indicate whether the battery power is sufficient, the clock pointer represents time, and the "A" button on the elevator door represents demand. Uplink, etc., are symbols. (Hawkes, 1997) A symbol is a medium for explaining the meaning or implication of a specific object, which is established by human beings through a certain group consciousness in the process of social development. It reveals the relationship between people and things,

and things and things. In short, all material entities that can express group consensus or conventional things, ideas, concepts or meanings in concrete images are symbols.

Symbols have already appeared along with the development of human language. Modern semiotics is mainly influenced by structural linguistics, logic, cultural philosophy and aesthetics in the development process. With the deepening of human research on symbols, symbols gradually It forms an independent discipline and realizes the integration of disciplines. There are two founders of modern semiotics, one is the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and the other is the American philosopher and logician Charles Sanders Peirce. Saussure's research put forward the theory of semiotics based on linguistics, while Peirce's research field is logical semiotics. They explained what a sign is from different aspects, and closely combined the sign with the development of human society. Based on the research of these two scholars, scholars have conducted research on semiotics from different angles.

Saussure divided the composition and organization of language signs from the perspective of semiotics, and decomposed the concept of signs into "signifier" and "signified". A complete sign system needs "signified" and "signifier". "Combined to form. The medium used to refer to or represent a certain thing is the so-called "signifier", which is the expression level of the thing, while the "signified" is the thing referred to or involved, which is the connotative level of the thing, and points out the relationship between the signifier and the thing. The fingers are connected together through collective habits or conventions. ( **Hawkes, 1997**)

Since Saussure's research focuses on language, his semiotic structural model also takes language as the core of its symbols. Sexuality refers to the formative period of a language, that is, the initial determination that this association is the result of free choice. This arbitrariness determines the differences in language symbols formed by different countries and different nationalities. For example, Apple is written as "苹果" in Chinese characters, called "apple" in English, and "pomme" in French. This fully demonstrates that the signifier and signified of language symbols are arbitrary at the beginning, but once the language is formed, they have the nature of convention. This kind of convention is the result of common cognition of human beings under the development of history, so no matter in any era, language symbols are developed on the basis of inheriting the heritage products of the previous era. This forms the continuity of the language inheritance relationship and the variability with the development of the times.

Unlike Saussure, Peirce proposed the principle of creating semiotics from the study of logic. Since logic is a discipline that studies thinking forms, processes, basic

laws and methods, this semiotic theory of Peirce is applicable to all kinds of symbols phenomenon, also known as generalized semiotics.

Peirce understands signs as things that represent or express other things, signs can be understood or interpreted by people and have certain meanings to people. On this basis, he divided symbols into three elements: one is the medium, also known as the medium-related object, which is a material existence used to represent or replace a certain object; the other is the referent object, also known as the object-related Objects, that is, the things referred to and represented by symbols; the third is interpretation, also known as interpretation-related objects, which are understood by people and convey a certain meaning. ( **Hawkes, 1997**) These three constitute a complete symbol system, and they coexist. That is to say, the sign exists simultaneously as a medium, a referent and its interpretation. These three constituent elements of symbols involve different levels of human thinking.

Peirce's way of dividing signs into three is not only more one-dimensional than Saussure's, but also emphasizes the potential of signification to expand and continue. The object is fixed, and it is not easy to change with the interpretation, while the interpretation item is produced entirely by the receiver's interpretation. This decomposition puts the focus of the symbolic process on the receiving end. This also shows that the symbols that have not been received are incomplete symbols.

In Peirce's trichotomy of signs, the most important thing is to divide signs into three categories: image signs, reference signs, and symbolic signs according to the relationship between sign symbols and objects. This classification reflects the different ways of representing signs. . The symbols of pictorial symbols represent objects in a similar way, for example, a portrait, although not the person, can represent that person; reference symbols are the existence of a relationship between the symbolic shape and the symbolic object represented. The direct causal or proximity connection enables the symbol body to indicate or index the existence of the symbol object; there is no resemblance or causal relationship between the symbol body and the symbol object, and their representation is only based on social conventions basis.

The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer expanded the neo-Kantian "free will" into a philosophy of symbols that includes natural science and humanities research, and intentionally explained the cultural activities of all human beings with the concept of symbols. Cassirer believes that culture is created by human beings in social labor, and history is formed in the process of human beings creating culture. The language, art, mythology, science, and utensils passed down in history all together constitute the world of culture. This creative activity is a symbolic phenomenon. In the whole

nature, only human beings can use symbols, which is also the difference between human beings and other creatures, so only human beings have their own culture and history.

Cassirer mentioned in his book "On Man": "Symbolic thinking and symbolic behavior are the most representative features in human life, and all the development of human culture depends on these conditions. Indisputable." He pointed out in the book that symbols can refer to or represent other objects through the description of various propositional languages, all human cultural forms are presented in the form of symbols, and symbol phenomena cover all human cultural fields. Cassirer pointed out that art is a culture created by human social activities. Art symbols are clearly different from other conceptual symbols. Art is a symbol that expresses the human soul through its form, rhythm, to shape the activity. **(H Zhan, 2017)**

Soviet Russian semiotician Bakhtin initiated the tradition of studying culture from the perspective of form, known as "language-centered Marxism". His book "Marxism and the Philosophy of Language" discusses the problem of signs in a large part, linking signs and ideology together, and holds that all ideologies are symbols that represent, express or replace something that exists outside of it. He combined signs and sociology for research, and proposed the theory of "Symbol Domain", and his research results influenced the Tartu School founded by Lotman, Ivanov and others. The famous Soviet literary theorist and semiotician Lotman inherited and carried forward the theory of "the field of signs" on the basis of Bakhtin's research. Lotman believes that the existence and operation of signs requires a certain space and operating mechanism. **(H Guohua, 2018)** And the mechanism is the "semiotic field", which is not only the condition for the existence of culture, but also the result of cultural development, "the existence of the semiotic field enables various symbol systems in the development of historical culture to operate. The concept of "symbolic domain" shows that human cultures have different personalities in space, and different cultures continue to merge and influence each other as time changes. Finally, human cultural patterns can continue and develop in time and space. This kind of information can also be transmitted, preserved and innovated. With the help of semiotic field theory, we can grasp the culture as a whole, and at the same time use the various languages of culture as an entry point, so as to understand the existence of culture and grasp the law of its development and change. In this way, when we study culture as a whole, it has its own boundaries, and the concepts of the center, edge, and boundary of the semiotic domain, which are inseparable from the internal mechanism of culture, will be produced, and the boundary is one of the mechanisms in this mechanism. crucial link. **(Hawkes, 1997)**

"Boundary" is an important concept in Lotman's "Semiotic Domain" theory. He believes that the boundary is not only a barrier separating different cultural symbols but also a bridge connecting different cultural symbols. It plays an important role in different cultural symbols. The role of fusion is to play the role of buffer and medium in hedging, communication and penetration. At the same time, the boundary has the function of accelerating symbolic activities in the symbolic field and promoting the rapid development of the entire symbolic field. The center of culture is stable and orderly. This kind of stability tends to lose vitality and innovation easily. Marxist philosophy once pointed out that the essence of development is that new things replace old things. It will lead to the stagnation of this cultural development, and it is the existence of the edge that brings contradictory and conflicting conditions for foreign cultural symbols and local cultural symbols, so that the two can be integrated in the contradiction and bring development opportunities for the entire symbolic field.

## **2. Interpretation of patterns in Mazu culture from the perspective of semiotics**

In the category of semiotics, many thinkers, philosophers, and anthropologists have studied the relationship between symbols and culture. Among them, the more famous ones are Cassirer's cultural semiotic theory, and Lotman's "boundary" theory of semiotic domain. Cassirer once explained that each symbol is a part of a certain culture, and countless different symbols form a criss-cross network. It can be said that culture is a symbol network. More important than the symbols themselves are the metaphorical meanings that symbols imply outside of themselves and the interrelated systems of meaning that these meanings generate, which constitute human culture. (K Lihong, 2006)

Human beings not only live in nature, but also in a cultural world. The cultural value created by human beings in social activities is the embodiment of human beings. In such creative activities, human beings can realize true freedom. This is why the human world is different from the animal world. This human activity of creating culture is symbolic activity, which is unique to human beings, and all human cultural development depends on symbolic activity. Those cultural symbols created by human beings are the continuation of human spiritual civilization and technological innovation. This can also be reflected in Mazu culture and patterns in Mazu culture. The patterns in Mazu culture are not only the reproduction of various things in nature, but also the creative abstract processing of what they saw and heard by folk artists. They form a system and reflect the inner world of people at that time, such as the Phoenix The dragon pattern and dragon pattern represent people's yearning and worship for divinity, and are a direct reflection of Mazu's noble status. The bat pattern

is people's reflection of nature under the influence of Taoist thought. The use of homonyms implies blessing and happiness. These are the products of people's symbolic activities and the crystallization of wisdom, and also represent the metaphorical meaning of patterns outside themselves, forming a part of Mazu's culture.

It can be seen that symbolic activities have the function of connecting human beings with culture. In human social activities, various experiences constitute different symbols, and different symbols are also inextricably linked. Cassirer expresses his symbolic philosophy through "human beings use symbolic activities to form culture". (L Lifang, 2018) The world in which human beings live is a world of symbols. Various symbols are created through social activities. These symbols constitute a large cultural system, and ultimately culture is passed on through these symbol systems. A large part of the content related to Mazu culture that we can access now is conveyed through various symbols. The historical materials recorded in writing allow us to understand the overall historical development process of Mazu belief. The existing various buildings, statues and other artifacts related to Mazu let us know people's memory of Mazu culture. The various graphic symbols on the pattern let us understand more can more intuitively see the spiritual power and value of faith. These symbols constitute culture, which embodies the spiritual connotation of culture, and is also an important means of spreading culture. The Mazu culture has formed its own set of cultural symbol system, which also demonstrates Lotman's "boundary" theory of the symbol field.

Saussure put forward the symbol concept of "signifier" and "signified", elicited the principle of arbitrariness in the composition of symbols, and tried to explain that the relationship between the signifier and the signified in language is artificial, and it is the result of human beings' social experience. By convention. According to the arbitrariness of language, Saussure also pointed out that for the people who use a certain language, once this language is formed, it is compulsory, and it does not depend on the will of a few people. Therefore, the language symbols used by human beings are all formed under the inheritance and development of history, and language symbols have inheritance and continuity. This is Saussure's point of view based on linguistic semiotics. Lotman then extended the narrow natural language symbols to all symbols used in culture, and believed that cultural phenomena are social activities in which human beings express their various experiences and meanings of existence, such as Literature, music, architecture, film, folklore, etc. all have their own specific symbols and become the carrier of culture. (L Yachi; W Qian; J Bowen, 2019)



Like natural language symbols, cultural symbols also form systems in human social activities, which are not only the process of communication between people and society, but also the result of communication. This "society" refers to the collection of people who speak the same language, have the same customs, live in the same area, and have the same cultural traditions, that is, nations, and many nations form multiple different national cultures. The carrier of these national cultures is the sum of multiple languages and multiple symbol systems, that is, the symbol domain. The semiotic field records the history of a nation's activities and the different cultural types generated in the history, and is the process and result of human cognition of the external world. Ethnic culture mainly includes the language books, rules and regulations, living utensils, buildings, etc. of the nation, all of which are the product of historical development and cultural development, and are the result of each nation's special way of understanding the world. **(L Yachi; W Qian; J Bowen, 2019)** However, if different nations want to seek development, they have to communicate with the outside world, and if they want to achieve communication and contact with the outside world, they have to use some means to translate the outside culture into the content of the symbolic realm. With such a demand, these cultural symbols are gradually transformed into graphic symbols that are more intuitive than language and text through the experience accumulated by human beings in creation activities and communication with the outside world, and are produced as a medium of information exchange.

Graphical symbols originated from ancient totems, and totems were used as symbols of primitive clans and tribes. Different clans and tribes have formed their own unique symbol domains in the course of historical development. As one of the cultural symbols, graphic symbols are the product of the development of national culture in the field of symbols. The emergence of Mazu belief is the result of the materialization of people's spiritual intentions. In the social environment at that time, people urgently needed the spiritual support of Mazu belief. The belief in Mazu was influenced by Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism when it was first formed. The graphic symbols on these patterns are the Mazu culture displayed on the utensils, developed in a specific cultural environment and geographical environment, and projected on The Mazu culture on the utensils has strong historical value, cultural value and social value. **(Z Weifeng, 2018)**

After studying a large number of semiotic theories, Zhao Yiheng, a famous Chinese scholar, defined in his book "Principles and Deductions of Semiotics" that signs are concrete objects or behaviors that are considered to carry meanings, explaining human behaviors or behaviors in order to achieve a certain purpose. Every available item may become a sign carrier of meaning. His definition comes from

Peirce's proposition that "a sign is composed of three parts: media-related, object-related and interpreted-related. Among them, the meaning of the referent can be perceived by the interpreter through the medium, that is, the medium has The ideographic function, which conveys the meaning of the referent to the interpreter". In this relationship, when the interpreter is specific to a certain person, the interpretation of the referent represented by the medium should not be a specific interpretation but have universal interpretability. It will vary according to the education level and life experience of different interpreters. At the same time, this explanatory item will create a corresponding or further developed symbol in this person's mind. That is to say, the sign activity does not have a specific end point, and the sign that interprets the sign still needs another sign to explain, so it can be deduced that the sign can be infinitely derived.

According to the infinite derivation of symbols, Pierce puts forward the following explanation: "Man points to the object of his attention at the moment; but man means his knowledge and feeling of this object, and he himself is the physical incarnation of this form or category of knowledge; His explanatory term is the future memory of this cognition, his own future, another person to whom he expresses meaning, or the sentence he wrote down, or the child he gave birth to." In this explanation, through symbols. (Z Mei, 2015) The future, others, creation, and children that are extended by functions are all symbols of infinite meaning, evolving into an endless symbolic process. Since interpretation can also become a symbol, in order to effectively touch the symbol itself, it is necessary to add a supplementary interpretation so that it can be properly integrated with the symbol. Modern design activities are just one of the ways to add supplementary interpretation.

Patterns in Mazu culture are an important part of Chinese traditional culture and one of the important representatives of marine culture. Mazu belief is a kind of Chinese folk belief culture. It originated in Fujian. After long-term development and inheritance, it has become a unique cultural phenomenon in southern China. The pattern in Mazu culture is one of the manifestations of Mazu belief, which has rich cultural connotation and artistic value. Here we will discuss the types and characteristics of patterns in Mazu culture.

The types of patterns in Mazu culture mainly revolve around Mazu's belief activities and themes of Mazu culture, including Mazu's statues, Mazu's palace temples, Mazu's legends, Mazu's buildings, etc.

Mazu statues refer to artistic patterns with the image of Mazu as the theme. It usually includes the head portrait and full body portrait of Mazu, which has the characteristics of solemnity, mystery and majesty. The portrait of Mazu is one of the

cores of Mazu belief, showing people's reverence and belief in Mazu. Mazu portraits usually use red, yellow, green, blue and other colors, implying good luck and colorful. The lines are smooth and the outline is meticulous, reflecting the skill and beauty of traditional Chinese art. The portraits of Mazu are lifelike and expressive, showing Mazu's mysterious majesty and humanistic feelings. (O Da, 2020)

Mazu boat patterns refer to artistic patterns with the theme of Mazu boats. Mazu is the patron saint of sea navigation, so the Mazu boat pattern is one of the common patterns in Mazu culture, usually including Mazu boat, sails and other elements, implying peace and prosperity, and smooth sailing. The Mazu boat pattern is also one of the important manifestations of Mazu belief, reflecting people's belief in Mazu and yearning for sea voyages. The lines of the Mazu boat pattern are smooth, the image is lifelike, and it has a certain degree of decoration and allegory, which is an important part of traditional Chinese art.

Mazu Temple patterns refer to artistic patterns with the theme of Mazu Temple. Mazu belief is widely spread throughout China, and Mazu temple is one of the important places of Mazu belief. The patterns of Mazu temples usually include elements such as temple gates, temples, incense burners, and god statues, which are religious and solemn. The patterns of Mazu Temple reflect the characteristics and style of traditional Chinese religious culture and are an important part of traditional Chinese art.

The pattern of Mazu's offering to the sea refers to the artistic pattern with the theme of Mazu's offering to the sea. The belief in Mazu believes that Mazu is the god of the sea, who can bless people to be safe and smooth at sea. Therefore, every year on March 23rd of the lunar calendar is the day when Mazu worships the sea, and people hold a sea sacrifice ceremony to pray for Mazu's blessing. The patterns of Mazu's offering to the sea usually include scenes of Mazu's offering to the sea, sacrifices, lion dances and other elements, implying gratitude to the sea god and praying for safety at sea. Mazu's sea worship patterns reflect people's emotions and beliefs in marine culture and Mazu belief, and are one of the important representatives of Chinese marine culture and folk belief culture.

Mazu legend patterns refer to artistic patterns with the theme of Mazu legends. Mazu is a legendary figure in Chinese folk belief culture. It is said that she can control the wind and waves and bless people safe at sea. The patterns of Mazu legends usually include legendary scenes such as Mazu crossing the sea, saving people, and subduing demons, etc., which have a strong mythological color and cultural heritage. The pattern of Mazu legend reflects the myths and legends in Chinese folk belief

culture and people's respect and belief in Mazu, and is an important part of Chinese traditional culture and art.

The patterns in Mazu culture usually use red, yellow, green, blue and other colors, implying good luck and colorfulness. The patterns in Mazu culture are colorful and bright, giving people a sense of joy and hope. The patterns in Mazu culture have smooth lines and meticulous outlines, reflecting the skills and beauty of traditional Chinese art. The smoothness of the lines and the delicacy of the outlines show the beauty and delicacy of the patterns in the Mazu culture, giving people a sense of pleasure in appreciation. The patterns in Mazu culture are vivid and expressive, showing Mazu's mysterious majesty and humanistic feelings. The design and drawing of patterns in Mazu culture usually requires artists to have certain skills and painting skills in order to show the characteristics and image of Mazu.

The patterns in Mazu culture have certain allegorical and symbolic meanings. The implication and emotions expressed by the patterns in different Mazu cultures will also vary due to the different beliefs and cultural backgrounds of believers. The implication and emotions conveyed by the patterns in Mazu culture have deeply touched people's hearts, expressing human's awe of nature and fear of unknown forces. **(Z Weifeng, 2018)**

The patterns in Mazu culture are the product of Chinese folk belief culture and are closely related to people's lives. The creation and inheritance of patterns in Mazu culture are usually done by folk artists or believers, which has a strong flavor of folk culture. The patterns in Mazu culture, through the form of art, have deeply rooted Mazu belief and marine culture in the hearts of the people, and have become an important part of Chinese folk culture.

Mazu beliefs are widely spread throughout China, so the patterns in Mazu culture in different regions will also be different, reflecting the characteristics and styles of local cultures. For example, in the patterns of Mazu culture in Fujian, characteristic elements of southern Fujian, such as dragon boats and worship dances, are usually added, while in the patterns of Mazu culture in Taiwan, elements of southern Fujian culture and Taiwan characteristics are added.

The pattern in Mazu culture is one of the manifestations of Mazu belief, so it has a certain religious color. The implication and emotions expressed by the patterns in different Mazu cultures will also vary due to the different beliefs and cultural backgrounds of believers. The patterns in Mazu culture express people's respect and belief in Mazu through the form of art, and also reflect the characteristics and style of traditional Chinese religious culture. **(D Qian, 2015)**

The pattern in Mazu culture is an important part of Chinese traditional culture and folk belief. It has rich cultural connotation and artistic value. pursuit of happiness. The types and characteristics of patterns in Mazu culture reflect the unique charm and style of Chinese folk belief culture, marine culture and traditional art. The patterns in Mazu culture have been constantly developing and changing in different historical periods and social backgrounds, incorporating modern elements, so that the patterns in Mazu culture not only retain the characteristics of traditional culture, but also have a sense of the times and modernity.

### **3. The symbolic meaning of patterns in Mazu culture**

Traditional Chinese patterns are an important part of Chinese culture, carrying rich historical, traditional and cultural connotations. Through the way of passing on from generation to generation, they pass on the genes of ancient wisdom and civilization, and protect and inherit China's unique cultural traditions. With its unique design and exquisite craftsmanship, traditional Chinese patterns play an important role in the field of aesthetics. These patterns use elements such as lines, colors and shapes to show outstanding artistic value, attract people's attention, and give people the enjoyment of beauty and aesthetic pleasure. At the same time, traditional patterns, as cultural symbols, have the power to unite society. They represent common historical memory and cultural identity, and can strengthen the connection and cohesion among members of society. Traditional patterns are often used in architecture, clothing, accessories, etc., so that people can feel common cultural symbols in their daily lives and strengthen social harmony and stability. **(G Yayun, 2020)**

Mazu culture is a unique culture in traditional Chinese culture, with distinct local characteristics and folk beliefs. In Mazu culture, patterns are one of the important forms of expression to show people's beliefs and cultural connotations, which contain rich symbolic meanings and cultural connotations. The composition of patterns is the basis for the existence of patterns. The basic elements of patterns in Mazu culture include lines, shapes, colors and cultural symbols.

In Mazu culture, lines are an important part of pattern composition and the key to closely connect the entire pattern. Lines in Mazu culture are usually expressed as delicate, smooth, soft, accurate, fine and dynamic. The lines of the arched bridge are soft and smooth, accurate and fine, giving people a strong visual experience.

Shape is one of the main means of pattern composition in Mazu culture. Shape can not only express the external form of things, but also express a certain special

meaning through certain deformation and combination. The circle symbolizes perfection, peace and eternity. For example, the common conch, turtle and Tai Chi patterns in Mazu culture are all based on the circle. **(H Guohua, 2018)**

Color is one of the important components of pattern composition in Mazu culture. Color is sometimes regarded as the soul of patterns, which can express a special cultural connotation through different color combinations and treatments. In Mazu culture, red and yellow are the most commonly used colors, representing enthusiasm, light and compassion.

Cultural symbols are one of the important components of patterns in Mazu culture, and are carriers that organically combine patterns and cultural connotations. The word "Fu", dragon and phoenix patterns, longevity peaches, fish, and brocade are all common cultural symbols in Mazu culture, which can arouse people's rich associations and unique cultural emotions.

The basic constituent elements of patterns in Mazu culture include lines, shapes, colors and cultural symbols, etc. In the extensive use of Mazu culture, these elements are intertwined to form a colorful and vibrant pattern world.

Common patterns in Mazu culture mainly include gossip, dragon, phoenix, lotus, plant, cloud, eight immortals, backgammon and five blessings. Each pattern has its own unique symbolic meaning.

Bagua pattern is one of the common patterns in Chinese traditional culture, and it has rich symbolic meanings. The gossip pattern originates from the gossip theory in the "Book of Changes". **(L Jing, 2012)** The gossip is a symbol system composed of yin and yang and eight basic elements, representing the law of change and development of everything in the universe. In Bagua patterns, the eight basic elements are presented in different combinations and arrangements, forming different patterns and meanings.

The yin and yang symbols in the gossip pattern represent two opposing and complementary forces of the universe. The balance and harmony of yin and yang symbolize the idea of balanced development and harmonious coexistence of things. Through the unity of opposites of yin and yang, the gossip pattern reminds people to pursue the balance of internal and external, mind and body, and the harmony between society and nature. The eight basic elements in the gossip pattern represent different natural forces and attributes, such as heaven, earth, thunder, wind, water, fire, mountain, lake, etc. The different ways in which these elements are combined and arranged symbolize the constant change and development of the universe and all things. The gossip pattern reminds people to adapt to changes, adapt to the

environment, and pursue personal and social development and progress. The eight basic elements in the Bagua pattern form a balanced pattern, symbolizing the interaction and harmony between various forces. This concept of balance and harmony also has important meanings in life, reminding people to pursue balance and harmony when dealing with interpersonal relationships, family harmony, and social stability. Bagua patterns are sometimes used as amulets or guardian symbols, symbolizing the meaning of protection and blessing. People believe that the power of gossip patterns can exorcise evil, avoid evil, bless peace and eliminate negative energy. Using Bagua patterns on buildings, utensils and decorations can bring people a sense of safety and protection.(L Xi, 2019)

As an important symbol in traditional Chinese culture, gossip patterns completely correspond to the connotation of Mazu culture. Using gossip patterns as decorative elements in Mazu culture is not only generous and harmonious, but also meets people's psychological needs and accurately conveys Mazu culture. spiritual connotation.



*Figure 1: Tai Chi Eight Diagrams.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

The dragon is considered a sacred creature in many cultures, symbolizing great power and authority. They are often depicted as large, winged reptiles with

extraordinary abilities. In East Asian culture, the dragon is one of the symbols of Chinese culture, representing imperial power and the power of the emperor. Dragons are considered auspicious symbols and are associated with positive qualities such as power, majesty, courage and wisdom. Dragon patterns can be regarded as a symbolic representation of this power and majesty, and they are often used to decorate palaces, temples and ancient buildings to highlight their solemnity and dignity.

Additionally, dragons are also associated with natural elements and cosmic forces. In many legends, dragons are seen as beings who rule the skies, seas and underground. They are believed to have the ability to manipulate weather, rainfall and water, and are associated with the conservation and fertility power of water sources. Dragon patterns can express worship and awe of the power of nature, as well as an understanding of the origin and cycle of life. (M Fangfei; L Zhi, 2011)

In some cultures, dragons are seen as symbols of wisdom and enlightenment. They are believed to possess endless knowledge and potential, and are the embodiment of wise men and teachers. The dragon pattern can symbolize the quest for knowledge and wisdom, as well as the desire to learn and grow. In ancient civilizations, dragons were often used as symbolic totems, encouraging people to pursue knowledge, cultivate wisdom and develop personal potential.

In addition, the dragon is also regarded as a symbol of courage and heroism. In many legends and stories, dragons are associated with warriors in battle, symbolizing bravery and fighting spirit. Dragon patterns can be seen as an expression of courage and heroic qualities, inspiring people to be brave in the face of challenges and difficulties.

Dragons are also often associated with luck and prosperity. In some Asian cultures, the dragon is seen as a symbol that brings good luck and a good harvest. Dragons are believed to have the power of blessing and protection, able to bestow prosperity and blessings on people. Therefore, dragon patterns are often used on celebratory and festive occasions to pray for good luck and prosperity. (W Limei, 2010)

In addition, the dragon is also considered a symbol of balance and harmony. In Chinese culture, the dragon corresponds to the phoenix, symbolizing balance and harmony between yin and yang. Dragon patterns can be seen as the pursuit of balance and harmony in life, as well as respect for social order and the laws of the universe.

It should be pointed out that the symbolic meaning of dragon patterns may vary in different cultures and traditions. In Western culture, dragons are often associated with dragons and destructive forces, representing evil and danger. However, in



general, as a totem and symbol, the dragon has multiple meanings such as power, holiness, wisdom, courage, luck, and harmony.(Y Rongmin, 2007)

In fields such as art, decoration and tattooing, dragon patterns are often used to highlight these symbolic meanings. They can be used to decorate clothing, furniture, buildings, etc., giving the work a mysterious, solemn and dignified atmosphere. At the same time, dragon patterns are also used as cultural and religious symbols, representing the identity and values of a specific culture.

The decoration of dragon patterns on Mazu's temple buildings and Mazu's costumes shows the dignity of Mazu's identity, reflects the status of Mazu as a god, and is the supreme respect for Mazu.



*Figure 2: Decoration of the dragon on the roof of the building.*  
Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

The phoenix pattern also has important symbolic meaning in Chinese traditional culture, and is regarded as a symbol of auspiciousness, beauty and auspiciousness. The phoenix is regarded as a symbol of auspiciousness and auspiciousness in Chinese culture. The phoenix is a fairy bird in myths and legends. It is considered a symbol of auspiciousness and happiness, and can bring good luck and blessings. Phoenix patterns are often used to celebrate festive occasions, such as weddings, births and major festivals, implying happiness and auspiciousness. Phoenix is one of the most beautiful and noble creatures in Chinese traditional culture. It is described as a bird with gorgeous feathers and elegant figure, which symbolizes beauty and nobility. Phoenix patterns are often used in clothing, architecture, utensils, etc. to show a noble and gorgeous image. Phoenix is regarded as a symbol of prosperity and prosperity. In traditional culture, the phoenix represents spring and vitality, which can bring good harvest and prosperity. The application of phoenix pattern is common in farming culture, business and wealth, to pray for prosperity and wealth.

Phoenix is also associated with love and marriage in Chinese culture. The phoenix is a legendary divine bird that often faces the dragon, symbolizing the harmony and perfect pairing between men and women. Therefore, the phoenix pattern is often used in wedding occasions, representing the beauty of love and the blessing of marriage. Phoenix is regarded as a symbol of women, representing women's beauty, wisdom and independence. In traditional culture, the phoenix often appears together with the dragon, symbolizing the balance of yin and yang and the concept of equality between men and women. The use of phoenix patterns in clothing and jewelry often emphasizes the charm and elegance of women. As an important symbol in Chinese traditional culture, the phoenix pattern has symbolic meanings such as auspiciousness, beauty, prosperity, love and feminine beauty. It represents multiple symbolic meanings such as auspiciousness and happiness, beauty and nobility, prosperity and prosperity, love and marriage, women and female beauty. The phoenix pattern is not only a decorative pattern, but also an important symbol that conveys the values of auspiciousness, beauty, prosperity and love in Mazu culture. Through the use and inheritance of the phoenix pattern, people can feel the pursuit of auspiciousness and happiness, and show their yearning for a better life and prosperity. (Z Weifeng, 2018)

The connotation symbol of the phoenix pattern is in line with the image characteristics of Mazu women. Mazu is gentle, generous, filial and intelligent. She spares no effort in protecting people's lives and property. She is willing to help others and has a spirit of dedication. She is the great love of the world.



*Figure 3: Pattern on architectural decoration of Mazu.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

The lotus pattern is regarded as a symbol of purity, nobility, solemnity and growth in Chinese traditional culture. The lotus is a flower that grows in water. It

blooms in the dirty soil without pollution, so it is regarded as a symbol of purity and elegance. The lotus pattern is often used to convey the value concept of purity and nobility, emphasizing the pursuit of purity and nobility. Lotus is regarded as a symbol of nobility and solemnity in Chinese traditional culture. With its tall, upright posture and gorgeous flowers, the lotus symbolizes noble and solemn qualities. The lotus pattern is often used in palace buildings, ancient costumes and cultural artworks to show a noble and solemn image.

The lotus flower undergoes a process of growth from a bud in the silt to a bloom on the surface of the water, representing a symbol of growth, change and transformation. This property makes the lotus a symbol of the beauty of life, self-improvement and spiritual growth. The lotus flower pattern is often used in situations that symbolize personal growth and positive change. The lotus also has important symbolic meaning in Buddhist culture. The lotus is a symbol of Buddha seated on a lotus pedestal, representing wisdom, enlightenment and spiritual awakening. The lotus pattern is often used in Buddhist architecture, sculpture and artwork to express the pursuit of wisdom and spiritual realm. The lotus is also regarded as a symbol of harmony and beauty in Chinese culture. With its symmetrical beauty and bright colors, the lotus flower is often used to symbolize the realm of beauty and harmony. Lotus patterns are often used in traditional painting, embroidery, ceramics and other fields to convey the pursuit of harmony and a better life.(Z Feifan, 2020)



*Figure 4: Lotus pattern decoration.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

Trees in nature are rich in symbolism across cultures and traditions. Trees represent the power of life and symbols of growth. They start as seeds, take root in the soil, and experience seasonal changes to thrive. Therefore, trees are regarded as a symbol of vitality, representing the continuation, development and prosperity of life. Trees are symbols of tenacity and stability in nature. They support themselves with a strong root system and strong dry branches that can withstand wind, rain and natural disasters. Trees are often used to express the qualities of tenacity, persistence and stability, and are symbols of strength and courage. Foliage changes with the seasons, from new green to brilliant colors to fading. This change symbolizes the flow of time and the cycle of life. The falling of the leaves also implies the end and the new beginning, representing the growth and change of the individual. In some cultures, old trees are seen as symbols of wisdom and longevity. Trees have accumulated rich wisdom through long-term growth and survival experience. Therefore, old trees are often used to symbolize wisdom, experience and longevity. (W Juchuan, 2017)

Trees form vast groves and forests in nature, and they are connected to each other by their root systems, forming vast social networks. This symbolism of socialization and connection reflects the importance of human relationships and community. In some cultures, specific trees are considered sacred symbols, associated with religion and worship. The symbolic meaning of trees coincides with many connotations of Mazu belief.



*Figure 5: Plant pattern decoration.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

As a pattern and design element, the bat pattern has rich symbolic meanings. In different cultures and traditions, bat patterns have been endowed with various

symbolic meanings, covering aspects such as omen, mystery, vitality, agility, night, darkness, flight, freedom, protection and auspiciousness.(Y Xiaoli, 2010)

First, bats are seen as symbols of omens in many cultures. They are often associated with occult and supernatural powers. Bats are nocturnal animals capable of flying in the dark, so they are considered a bridge between humans and the supernatural world. Bat patterns may be seen as symbols of good luck and mystical powers, and they are often used in works of art to add mystery and appeal.

Second, the bat symbolizes vitality and agility. As flying animals, bats possess excellent maneuverability and agility. They can quickly turn and catch prey in the air, so the bat pattern is used to express vitality, agility and alertness. This symbolism can be applied in the arts, sports or business to emphasize the movement and agency of an individual or a team.

Bats are also associated with night and darkness. Night is seen as a mysterious, quiet and hidden time, in stark contrast to the loud and bright of day. Bats, as nocturnal animals, represent life and activities that exist in the dark. Therefore, the bat pattern may be regarded as a symbol of dark, mysterious and unknown power, and a connection with the dark world.

At the same time, the unique flying ability of bats gives them a symbolic meaning of freedom and independence. The wings of bats enable them to fly in the air and move freely between the skies. Therefore, the bat pattern can symbolize freedom, independence and the ability to pursue dreams. They encourage people to dare to follow their dreams, to pursue freedom and personal growth.

The symbolic meaning of bat patterns can also vary according to culture and region. In some Aboriginal cultures, bats are seen as symbols of spirituality and wisdom, associated with the transmission of life force and wisdom. In other cultures, bats may symbolize the dark side or the concept of death.(Y Rongmin, 2007)

In Mazu culture, bats are seen as symbols of protection and good fortune. The pronunciation of the bat is similar to the word "Fu", so it is regarded as a symbol of auspiciousness. Bat patterns are often used in festive decorations, gifts and paintings to wish people good luck and happiness.(Q Jinliang, 1999) Bats are also believed to have the ability to ward off and ward off evil spirits, and are used in traditional culture to protect people from evil forces. This ability and the function it plays are consistent with Mazu, so it is applied to the architecture of Mazu's temples. Generally, in practical applications, it will be combined with traditional Chinese patterns, such as symmetry, repetition, etc. It embodies the sense of form and order of the patterns.



*Figure 6: Phoenix pattern decoration.*  
Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

The "Eight Immortals" are a group of gods in Chinese folklore. They have their own characteristics and supernatural powers, and they are often mentioned in Chinese culture. The "Eight Immortals" not only play an important role in folk tales, but also appear widely in art forms such as literature, painting, and drama. As a pattern and design element, the "Eight Immortals" pattern has rich symbolic meaning in Chinese culture. (L Xi, 2019) They represent the eight gods in ancient Chinese legends, carrying multiple meanings such as auspiciousness, mystery and morality.

In Chinese culture, "eight" is considered an auspicious number, associated with good luck and prosperity. The "Eight Immortals" pattern usually contains the images of eight figures, each with unique personalities and characteristics. The use of patterns conveys the pursuit of auspiciousness and happiness, and brings beautiful meanings and blessings. Therefore, the pattern of "Eight Immortals" is often used in decorations, artworks and traditional festivals to celebrate and pray. The "Eight Immortals" are regarded as the immortals who have successfully cultivated, can master magical magic weapons and have special abilities. The images of the eight immortals in the pattern, as well as their magic tools and supernatural powers, bring people a sense of mystery and extraordinariness. The "Eight Immortals" pattern stimulates people's curiosity and desire to explore the unknown world through its connection with mysterious power, emphasizing the connection between man and

nature, man and mystery. Each "Eight Immortals" represents a different character and cultivation philosophy. For example, Tieguai Li is famous for his compassion and helping the people, and Cao Guojiu is respected for his integrity and integrity. By using the "Eight Immortals" pattern, people can express their praise and pursuit of moral character and good behavior. The use of this pattern stimulates people's attention to moral cultivation and personality development, emphasizing the importance of character and morality in life. In addition, the "Eight Immortals" pattern also symbolizes human pursuits and ideals. The eight gods have reached the extraordinary realm through cultivation and Taoism. This conveys people's yearning for longevity, health and transcendence."(L Xinmei, 2007)

The eight gods all have special abilities and skills, and through practice and devotion, they have reached an extraordinary state. Their images and stories inspire people to continually strive for excellence, develop their potential, and achieve in their fields. Therefore, the use of the "Eight Immortals" pattern can symbolize the individual's spirit of pursuing excellence, developing potential and realizing self-worth. In addition, the "Eight Immortals" pattern also has a symbolic meaning of unity and cooperation. Although each of the "Eight Immortals" has its own personality and characteristics, they are often said to act together to solve problems or pursue common goals. This symbolizes the need for people to work together in real life, to overcome difficulties and achieve common goals through mutual support and collaboration. The use of the "Eight Immortals" pattern inspires people's emphasis on unity, cooperation and collective wisdom, emphasizing the importance of collective strength and collaborative spirit in achieving common goals.

Finally, the "Eight Immortals" pattern also has the meaning of cultural inheritance and artistic expression. The "Eight Immortals" are important characters in Chinese folklore, and their images and stories are widely used in art forms such as literature, painting, sculpture, and drama. The use of the pattern of "Eight Immortals" not only shows the richness and diversity of Chinese traditional culture, but also inherits the unique charm of ancient art. Through the dissemination and spread of artistic works, the pattern of "Eight Immortals" has left a precious artistic heritage for future generations and enriched the connotation of traditional Chinese art.



*Figure 7: Pattern decoration on building pillars.*  
Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

Kylin is one of the important mythical animals in Chinese traditional culture, it has the symbolic meaning of auspiciousness, auspiciousness and protection. As a pattern and design element, the unicorn pattern is widely used in the fields of art, architecture and decoration. The unicorn pattern symbolizes auspiciousness and auspiciousness. In traditional Chinese culture, Kirin is considered a symbol of auspiciousness, and is often regarded as the leader of mythical beasts. It is believed to bring good luck, good fortune and prosperity, representing happiness and auspiciousness. (K Lihong, 2006) The use of unicorn patterns expresses people's yearning for auspiciousness and a better future, as well as their pursuit of happiness and blessings. Therefore, unicorn patterns are often used in celebrations, weddings, festivals and other occasions to pray for good luck and auspiciousness.

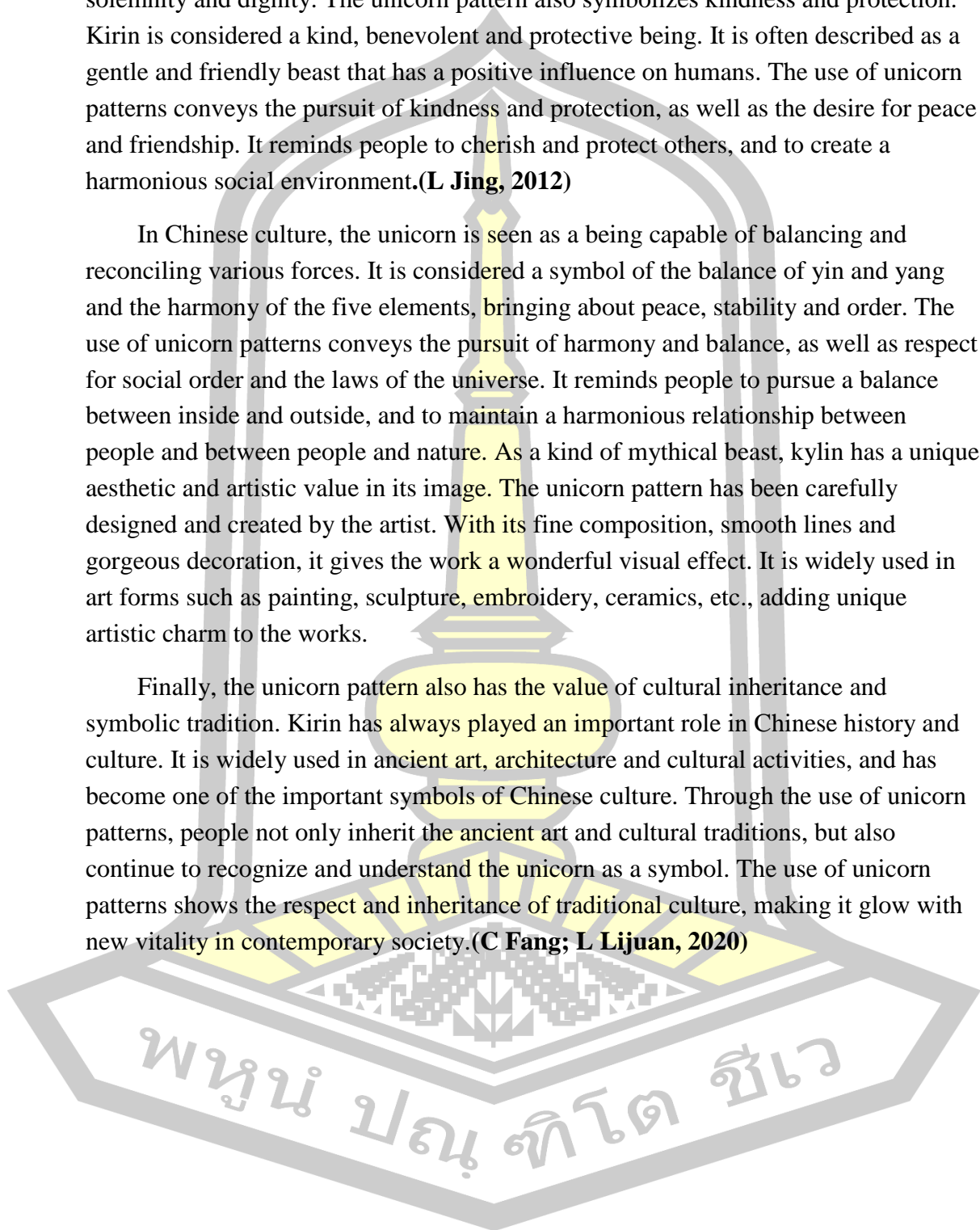
Qilin is regarded as the leader among the beasts, with a noble and majestic image. It represents noble qualities and superb abilities, and is considered to have divine power. The use of unicorn patterns conveys the pursuit of authority and nobility, as well as the awe of sacred and lofty existence. Therefore, unicorn patterns



are often used in palaces, temples, palaces and ancient buildings to highlight their solemnity and dignity. The unicorn pattern also symbolizes kindness and protection. Kirin is considered a kind, benevolent and protective being. It is often described as a gentle and friendly beast that has a positive influence on humans. The use of unicorn patterns conveys the pursuit of kindness and protection, as well as the desire for peace and friendship. It reminds people to cherish and protect others, and to create a harmonious social environment. **(L Jing, 2012)**

In Chinese culture, the unicorn is seen as a being capable of balancing and reconciling various forces. It is considered a symbol of the balance of yin and yang and the harmony of the five elements, bringing about peace, stability and order. The use of unicorn patterns conveys the pursuit of harmony and balance, as well as respect for social order and the laws of the universe. It reminds people to pursue a balance between inside and outside, and to maintain a harmonious relationship between people and between people and nature. As a kind of mythical beast, kylin has a unique aesthetic and artistic value in its image. The unicorn pattern has been carefully designed and created by the artist. With its fine composition, smooth lines and gorgeous decoration, it gives the work a wonderful visual effect. It is widely used in art forms such as painting, sculpture, embroidery, ceramics, etc., adding unique artistic charm to the works.

Finally, the unicorn pattern also has the value of cultural inheritance and symbolic tradition. Kirin has always played an important role in Chinese history and culture. It is widely used in ancient art, architecture and cultural activities, and has become one of the important symbols of Chinese culture. Through the use of unicorn patterns, people not only inherit the ancient art and cultural traditions, but also continue to recognize and understand the unicorn as a symbol. The use of unicorn patterns shows the respect and inheritance of traditional culture, making it glow with new vitality in contemporary society. **(C Fang; L Lijuan, 2020)**





*Figure 8: Stone carving pattern decoration.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

As an ancient artistic element, fish pattern has rich symbolic meaning. In many cultures, fish are regarded as animals with special symbolic meaning, representing auspiciousness, prosperity, wealth and happiness. The following will discuss the symbolic meaning of fish patterns from different cultural perspectives.

First of all, fish patterns have profound symbolic significance in Chinese culture. In Chinese characters, the pronunciation of fish (carp) is homonymous with "li" and "yu", implying wealth and abundance. Therefore, fish are often seen as a symbol of wealth and good luck. In traditional Chinese culture, fish patterns are widely used in decorations and gifts to express wishes for prosperity and auspiciousness. For example, in the common Chinese New Year pattern of "more than every year", the fish pattern symbolizes the continuation and growth of wealth.

Secondly, fish patterns have special symbolic significance in Buddhist culture. In Buddhism, the fish is called "fearless fish", implying the fearless spirit of adversity and suffering. There are stories about fish in Buddhist scriptures, such as Shakyamuni Buddha who turned into a fish to show the protection and salvation of life. Therefore, fish patterns are often used to decorate Buddhist temples and works of art to express the praise of fearlessness and compassion.

In addition, in Western culture, fish patterns also have a special symbolic meaning. In Christianity, the fish is used as a secret symbol, representing Jesus Christ. This is derived from the acronym for "fish" (ΙΧΘΥΣ) in Greek, which represents the meaning of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Savior and Lord. Therefore, fish patterns are widely used in Christian art, symbolizing faith and salvation. (S Maocai, 2016)

In addition, in some aboriginal cultures, fish patterns also have special symbolic meanings. For example, the salmon pattern in Native American culture is seen as representing the journey and cycle of life. Salmon swim back along the river and return to their birthplace, symbolizing courage and perseverance.

In addition, in some Asian cultures, fish patterns have also been given a symbolic meaning of family and unity. In Japanese culture, the carp is considered an animal of perseverance and courage. According to legend, a carp can swim upstream and jump over a waterfall to become a dragon, which symbolizes persistence and pursuit of difficulties. Carp patterns are often used to decorate Japanese homes and objects, symbolizing family unity and enduring love.

Additionally, in some African cultures, fish patterns are used to express a sense of community and belonging. For example, in the Igbo culture of Nigeria, fish patterns are one of the important artistic elements. They are used to adorn traditional clothing, utensils and buildings, symbolizing community cohesion and belonging. The fish pattern is also considered a protective symbol, used to protect the family and community from evil. (S Maocai, 2016)

The fish culture in Mazu culture absorbs Mazu's inclusive characteristics, has a beautiful symbol, and is full of vitality. It is expected that through Mazu's protection, the world will be full of happiness and prosperity.



*Figure 9: Fish pattern decoration.*

Source: Photographed by Hui Wang, 2022.

In addition, moiré is a pattern that frequently appears in art, culture and design and is rich in symbolic meaning. It represents the clouds in nature, and these clouds floating in the sky give people a dreamy, romantic and mysterious feeling. Cloud patterns symbolize infinity and vastness. The ever-changing shape and fluid nature of clouds in the sky make them a symbol of immensity. They float unrestricted in the

sky, showing us infinite possibilities and a boundless universe. The use of moiré in art and design is often used to express human dreams and pursuits, reminding people to move forward bravely and transcend the boundaries of reality. The shapes and colors of clouds often change from time to time and season, making them a symbol of change and flow. The use of cloud patterns can remind people that life is constantly changing, and they need to adapt and accept changes, and find balance and stability in the changes.

In addition, moiré also has a mysterious and transcendent symbolic meaning. Clouds are often associated with heaven, gods and the supernatural. Moires often appear in religion and mythology, and are used to express mysterious, divine and transcendent powers. This symbolic meaning makes moiré a poetic and religious pattern, which is widely used in architecture, painting and decorative arts to convey a spiritual pursuit beyond the material world. Moiré can also represent softness and tenderness. Clouds often give people a soft, light and warm feeling. The use of cloud patterns can bring comfort and tranquility, conveying a soothing and relaxing mood. This symbolism is often employed in interior design, home decor and textiles to make people feel at home and at ease. **(S Xuemei, 2016)**

As a special pattern in Mazu culture, backgammon patterns usually represent the wisdom and skills in Mazu culture. Backgammon represents the level of Chinese chess skills, and is often used as a tool for competitions in Mazu culture, and is often used to represent the wisdom and emotions of Mazu culture.

The Five Blessings Picture is a very important pattern in Mazu culture, which has five symbols of blessings. It often includes symbols of longevity, health, happiness, tranquility, and prosperity. The picture of five blessings is a kind of auspicious thing in Mazu culture, and it is also one of the commonly used patterns when celebrating Mazu's birthday.

To sum up, various patterns in Mazu culture have their unique characteristics in expressing their symbolic meaning and meaning. These patterns have brought many festive and auspicious wishes to people, and at the same time left a deep impression and cultural heritage on people.

## Chapter IV

### **New expressions of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society**

Mazu culture is an important part of Chinese marine culture, with Mazu belief as the core, widely spread in coastal areas. The patterns in Mazu culture are often related to elements such as statues, ships, and marine life, showing the worship of the ocean and the reverence for the gods of Mazu. When it comes to the new expression of patterns in Mazu culture, we need to conduct in-depth research on the connotation of Mazu culture in order to better understand the essence of Mazu culture and explore more innovative ideas.

For example, the traditional Mazu pattern is abstracted, the main elements are extracted and reinterpreted in the form of modern art. By simplifying the use of lines, geometric shapes and colors, a modern and artistic Mazu pattern is created. Using computer technology and graphic design software, the patterns of Mazu culture are digitized to create a new form of expression. Try using vector graphics, pixel art, or computer-generated artistic effects to express the patterns of Mazu culture. Integrate Mazu culture with other cultural elements to create a cross-cultural pattern expression. For example, combining the modern art style or the characteristics of other local cultures, combining Mazu patterns with it shows the blending and integration of multiple cultures. Using new materials and technical means, the Mazu pattern is presented on different media. For example, you can try to use light and shadow, projection or LED technologies to present Mazu patterns on the surface of buildings to create dynamic visual effects. Leverage the communication power of social media and digital platforms to promote and express the motifs in Mazu culture. Promote it to a wider audience by sharing and disseminating pictures, illustrations or animations of Mazu cultural patterns on the Internet. The possibilities of innovation are unlimited, and unique Mazu patterns can be created according to one's own understanding and creativity to show the charm of Mazu culture and the vitality of the times. (Z Feifan, 2020)

#### **1. Mazu culture under the background of the new era**

Contemporary society refers to the general term of social phenomena, structures and characteristics existing in the current time period. It is a dynamic concept,

Constantly evolving and changing over time. Contemporary society can be analyzed at different levels, including social, cultural, economics, politics, science and

technology and other fields. Contemporary society is characterized by diversity, pluralism and complexity. globalization and trust

The development of information technology has brought closer links between different regions and cultures, and people's lifestyles and values have become more diverse. Factors such as changes in social structure, population migration and urbanization have had a profound impact on contemporary society. When Modern society presents the integration and collision of multiple cultures. The trend of globalization has made exchanges and interactions between different cultures more frequent cultural diversity has been more widely recognized and respected. At the same time, the relationship between traditional culture and modern culture has also become an important issue in contemporary society.

In the current society, Mazu belief has been recognized and respected by the country and leaders, as a special spiritual bond, Mazu belief plays an active role in many fields, whether it is the construction and development of countries along the "Belt and Road". In terms of contact and communication in Western countries, people's recognition and love for Mazu surpasses other material aspects, especially. It is the nostalgia for home, hometown and country entrusted by overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese to Mazu, which reflects the uniqueness of Mazu belief cultural value. Mazu, as a folk god praying and escorting the sea god, has been spread for thousands of years since the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. Mazu is subject to the god of the sea worshiped by Chinese coastal fishermen, and the Chinese fishermen who immigrated to various countries in the wooden boat era, their footprints spread all over the world, and the belief of Mazu took root in the local area along with their footprints. All Chinese communities living overseas have one thing in common, that is, they all use Mazu Temple as their hometown association or chamber of commerce. Therefore, Mazu belief has become the common belief of Chinese people all over the world. There is even a saying in New York that "one Chinatown, two Tianfei Palaces".

According to the latest statistics from "Mazu Palace Integration", there are more than 10,000 Mazu palaces in the world, covering more than 40 countries and regions in the world, and all over China except Qinghai, Xinjiang, Tibet and other provinces and regions. There are more than 3 Mazu followers. There are as many as 100 million people, and there are Mazu Palaces almost wherever there are Chinese. On the surface, these Mazu Palaces are ancestral temples for overseas Chinese compatriots to worship, but in fact they are halls for overseas Chinese compatriots to gather, which play a role in connecting feelings and enhancing the centripetal force and cohesion of the Chinese nation. Cheppauer, the French National Institute of Nationalities,

established the "Zhenyi Church" in Paris to worship Mazu, and set up a research center for historical materials and cultural relics in the hall, naming Mazu as the "Goddess of World Peace", further sublimating Mazu belief and Mazu culture. As the birthplace of Mazu belief, Meizhou Island in Fujian Province has the reputation of "Oriental Mecca". Mazu believers take "pilgrimage to Meizhou" as their long-cherished wish in their life, and millions of believers come here every year, and Mazu pilgrimage tourism is thus formed. **(L Chunrong, 2006)**

In the past 30 years, the "mazu pilgrimage tourism craze" has been formed. Since Meizhou Island in Putian City was opened to Taiwan in 1988, there has been an endless stream of tourists entering the island. Especially in recent years, the development of Mazu pilgrimage tourism has reached a peak, which has successfully promoted the development of Putian City's tourism industry. The international "Mazu all over the world returns to her mother's home" campaign has also effectively promoted the development of tourism in the Holy Land of Mazu in Putian. **(R Qinghua, 2016)**

Cultural tourism is a tourism that relies on culture and meets the cultural needs of tourists. Cultural tourism means that tourism mediators (tourism departments) provide culturally-rich objects (cultural products and services) for tourism subjects (tourists), so that tourists can enjoy cultural enjoyment. Therefore, Mazu cultural tourism refers to relying on Mazu cultural tourism resources, the tourism department provides tourists with Mazu cultural tourism products and services rich in Mazu cultural characteristics, so as to meet tourists' spiritual demands for Mazu culture and other tourism needs. Its basic forms include pilgrimage tourism, sightseeing tourism, business tourism, academic study tour and so on. Mazu cultural tourism developed from Mazu pilgrimage tourism, with the emergence of Mazu belief, the opening of the Mazu Cultural Tourism Festival, the establishment of the Chinese Mazu Cultural Exchange Association and other activities, the form of Mazu cultural tourism is no longer limited to pilgrimage tourism, new forms such as Mazu festival tourism and Mazu study tourism have emerged. At present, Mazu cultural tourism is on the rise. Therefore, it is imminent to study the in-depth development of Mazu cultural tourism. **(H Ruiguo, 2013)**

Based on such a background of the times and a good opportunity for cultural tourism, extract the pattern elements in Mazu culture and apply them to modern design with innovation to develop cultural tourism products, or apply them as materials to paintings, sculptures, buildings, etc. For people to correctly understand and understand Mazu culture, understand Mazu spirit and cultural connotation, in the new era, through new media channels, use more innovative methods and products to

attract young people's interest in traditional culture. Give full play to the power of the government, the public, experts, scholars, and designers, choose good themes, and combine modern aesthetic principles to make Mazu culture more eye-catching in contemporary society, and let the light of Mazu spirit shine farther and farther, affecting More people continue to contribute to the inheritance and development of Mazu culture.

Cultural and creative products are "cultural and creative products". Through creative design of products, their cultural connotation is enhanced and economic added value is increased. Culture is the inheritance and development of national history, geography, customs, art, ideas, values, etc. It is condensed in the material and free from the material. It is the sublimation of the grasp and experience of the objective world in human social activities. In the semiotic field, it is reflected in the unique cultural environment, background and cultural space of different nationalities. From a narrow perspective, it can be summarized as the spiritual and material content that is widely recognized by a group and forms the group's thinking and behavior system. Creativity refers to the creative consciousness or innovative consciousness that breaks the traditional and conventional philosophy. It refers to a new abstract thinking and behavior artificially derived on the basis of the understanding and cognition of existing things in reality. (K Lifang, 2018) Creativity is the creative change of traditional things under the cognition of living environment and the accumulation of cultural environment. Innovation is the process of turning something old into something new. It is a new and creative idea that is different from the usual solutions. Reinterpret and create original content in an innovative way. Therefore, we can define cultural and creative products as "related products that are reinterpreted and created in innovative ways based on systematic cultural themes with a wide audience".

## **2. The expression method of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society**

### **2.1 Design elements of patterns in Mazu culture**

Good works are rich in connotation, pleasing to the eye and purifying the soul. Mazu's cultural and creative products must also be able to achieve this effect. Mazu's innate spiritual advantage of inspiring people determines the personality of Mazu-related cultural and creative products. Therefore, the refinement and analysis of the pattern elements in Mazu culture is very important. As the first step of creation, it is necessary to conduct in-depth analysis and dissection of the research object, organize, refine and innovate the original materials. This kind of innovation must be based on traditional graphics, must retain the characteristics and essence of Mazu culture itself,



and then reprocess the pattern elements, combined with modern creative concepts, to complete works with modern style. (Z Weifeng, 2018)

As the material carrier of Mazu culture, pattern elements are cultural symbols with symbolic significance. Their selection and application are to integrate cultural connotations into creation and reflect the characteristics of Mazu culture.

The pattern elements in Mazu culture can be divided into two categories: theme content and visual form according to the field of application. The pattern elements within the scope of subject matter can be divided into six categories: "legendary stories", "sacrificial activities", "historical events", "documents and historical materials", "folk customs" and "manufacturing skills". Pattern elements in the category of visual form can be divided into eight categories: "image murals", "calligraphy inscriptions", "traditional costumes", "palace and temple buildings", "local opera", "religious objects", "traditional patterns" and "traditional handicrafts". Among them, art Class elements can best reflect the visual characteristics of Mazu, and are easier to apply to the decomposition and creation of elements, so as to establish the visual system of Mazu culture, form the graphic symbols of Mazu culture, and highlight the theme of Mazu's belief and custom culture.

The sorting and induction of these pattern elements is intended to transform symbolic elements into cultural characteristics, effectively provide a steady stream of materials and inspiration for creation, and promote the integration of Mazu culture into cultural and creative products and other art forms in the form of material carriers. . Using the graphic symbols of Mazu culture, we must show products that meet modern aesthetic needs in terms of creative concepts and external forms of products, so as to integrate traditional elements into modern products and designs in new forms, and better promote Innovation in the application of traditional culture.

## 2.2 Current status of creation and application related to Mazu culture

The R&D and production of Mazu cultural and creative products are mainly concentrated in Putian, the birthplace of Mazu culture. In recent years, the Putian Municipal Government has put forward a regional brand strategy represented by "Mazu Culture" to drive the start and development of Mazu cultural and creative industries with regional characteristics. At the present stage, the research and development strategy of Putian Mazu cultural and creative products is based on Mazu portraits and Mazu legends, using realistic expression techniques and combining local traditional crafts to create ornaments and decorations. Representative works include cloisonne Mazu porcelain statues, Mazu Themes of woodcarving, etc. (L Yuhao, 2017) The creation of painting is mainly combined with the legend of Mazu, using modern painting techniques to innovate and develop. In order to better cater to the

tourism market and in line with Putian City's strategic policy of focusing on the development of Meizhou Island tourism, a large number of tourism-related cultural and creative products are needed as souvenirs to meet the needs of tourists and believers. Many portraits of Mazu have been born from this. Tourism souvenirs with the theme of protecting safety, such as T-shirts, sachets, Mazu cake gift boxes, Mazu cartoon dolls, mobile phone cases, porcelain, calendars, umbrellas, maps, handbags, etc.

Generally speaking, since the overall cultural and creative industry is still in its infancy, Fujian Mazu's cultural and creative products still have a long way to go, and the existing problems at this stage are also obvious, mainly manifested in: First, the product types are relatively single. The phenomenon of homogeneity is serious, the practical functions of the products are weak, and the quality is uneven. Many products are purely for attracting people's attention. There are many ornamental handicrafts, which leads to the weak desire of tourists to buy. Secondly, it blindly pursues the quantity of products, but lacks connotation in the content design of the product, fails to use the graphic symbols of Mazu culture to highlight the value of Mazu culture, and highlights the spirit of Mazu, as well as Mazu's peace goddess, sea goddess and other areas Sexual cultural characteristics. Then, the market positioning of the product is not clear, and the brand awareness is not strong, which leads to the loss of consumers, and there is no way to form a long-term and effective product development mechanism. **(H Xiulin, 2012)**

The patterns in Mazu culture have attracted much attention because of their rich symbolic meanings. With the development of modernization, these patterns have not only been protected and promoted in cultural inheritance, but also widely used in the commercial field. **(H Cheng, 2014)**

Commercial application is an important aspect of motifs in Mazu culture. In contemporary society, business activities are one of the important driving forces of social development. All kinds of businesses, institutions and organizations need a symbol to represent their identity and characteristics, and the symbolic meaning and unique style of patterns in Mazu culture is the perfect choice to meet this need.

The commercial application of patterns in Mazu culture has a wide range, involving clothing, home decoration, accessories, cultural and creative products and other fields. In terms of clothing, the image of Mazu, as a local cultural symbol, has long been a representative of clothing in Fujian. Not only that, major brands have also borrowed various pattern elements from Mazu culture and integrated them into the detailed design, making the products more local cultural.

In addition, the commercial application of patterns in Mazu culture is also reflected in the field of home decoration and accessories. Many companies and designers have launched various styles of home decoration and accessories based on the characteristics of patterns in Mazu culture. These products inherit the profound connotation of Mazu culture, and at the same time meet the modern aesthetic requirements.

However, in the process of commercial application, some patterns in Mazu culture may lose their original meaning and become purely decorative elements. This requires us to strengthen cultural protection and inheritance, so that the patterns in Mazu culture not only become objects of commercial use, but also let people know and understand its profound cultural heritage, so as to promote its spread to the wider society.

To sum up, the patterns in Mazu culture have been widely used in contemporary society, which is also a way of inheriting Mazu culture. We should strengthen the protection and inheritance of patterns in Mazu culture, so that they can present more unique cultural charm and artistic value, and make great contributions to local economic development and cultural exchanges.

### 2.3 The design principles of using patterns in Mazu culture for creation

In order to be able to better carry out the creation of Mazu cultural and creative products and other themes, after fully investigating the market situation, understanding the real needs of consumers, and locating precise consumer groups, carry out design research work in a targeted manner and master design principles, which is conducive to the creation of Mazu's cultural creativity can be carried out and completed according to our established ideas.

The principle of cultural uniqueness. When the graphic symbols of Mazu culture are applied to cultural and creative products, attention should be paid to its cultural connotation and the symbolic meaning of graphic symbols, especially the close connection with Mazu culture. Many graphic symbols of Mazu culture have a strong sense of beauty, and they are integrated from the excellent traditional Chinese culture. They have a sense of historical precipitation, and there are often similarities between cultures. Therefore, when using graphic symbols of Mazu culture When it comes to cultural and creative product design, it is necessary to measure the commonality and individuality between different cultures and Mazu culture, to preserve the uniqueness of Mazu culture in creation, and to focus on the inheritance and dissemination of Mazu culture, so that consumers can learn from The product and its design feel the resonance of culture and emotion, and feel the communication between reality and Mazu spirit.(L Xinmei, 2007)

Aesthetic principles. Packaging is a silent salesman for products. Consumers often buy a product because they like the packaging. In packaging design, the first impression is particularly important. Therefore, when applying the graphic symbols of Mazu culture to cultural and creative products and packaging design, we must pay attention to the coordination between graphics and graphics, pay attention to the coordination between graphics and structures, and pay attention to the coordination between graphics and colors. The treatment makes the packaging modern, not only has cultural connotations, but also looks fashionable and generous, which is easier for consumers to accept, especially for young people. (Z Weifeng, 2018)

Functional principle. Mazu's cultural and creative products must not only be beautiful and generous, but more importantly, pay attention to their practical functions. In modern society, people's material living standards have been greatly improved, and living materials are relatively sufficient. Due to serious homogeneity and other problems, there have been too many tourism products. Therefore, people's purchase of products, especially the purchase of tourist souvenirs, is not only to keep a memory, but to choose some more practical products on the basis of realizing the commemorative function. Don't waste, make the best use of everything. While realizing the commercial function of the product, it also needs to be innovative, practical, easy to understand, and conform to the ecological function. The function should not be neglected because of the emphasis on the appearance and form. A good design should pay equal attention to function and form.

Principle of innovation. Cultural and creative products emphasize creativity and innovation, and they are the carrier of culture. In contemporary society, people no longer use the traditional way to experience culture. Modern people have modern ways. With the advancement and development of science and technology, the popularity of computers and mobile phones has promoted the communication between people. The emergence of new media has made it easier and faster for people to obtain information, and faster ideological progress. Therefore, in terms of learning and absorbing traditional culture, it must be able to fit the lives of modern people and let traditional culture bloom new. shine.

In the diversified development of cultural and creative products, the impact of various regional cultures, the ever-changing aesthetics, and the rise of the Chinese cultural and creative product market have created the popularity of cultural and creative products. The works of each era reflect the background of life and aesthetic culture at that time, thus indirectly developing the aesthetics of this era. Traditional patterns cannot be abandoned by the times, they must be integrated into modern life, endowed with new connotation and life in order to be able to continue. The design of

Mazu cultural and creative products must be infused with cultural connotation. It must conform to the life style of modern people and at the same time spread Mazu culture.(L Jing, 2012)

The author will sort out and analyze the application cases of patterns related to Mazu culture that exist in the current market, and find that contemporary popular elements are used as design themes and sources of inspiration for cultural and creative products, so that the cultural contrast and conflict between the new and the old can be integrated, Design products that meet the needs of modern people, create cultural and creative products with cultural characteristics and modernity, and revive Mazu culture in cultural and creative products, so that you can have more cultural spiritual connotations and values. Through the analysis of the developed Mazu cultural and creative products, the advantages and disadvantages of the current design can be found, which can be used as a reference for later designers, government management departments and related practitioners.

#### 2.4 Design means of patterns in Mazu culture

Integration is to re-integrate creative elements through rectification and coordination. By integrating this design transformation method, the patterns of Mazu culture and modern fashion aesthetics are combined to form an overall design framework, and useful materials are integrated, and the spiritual symbols and patterns of Mazu culture are extracted and used, so that Mazu Patterns in culture generate new connotations and forms.

The simplification of ornamentation is to generalize and summarize the extracted patterns in Mazu culture. Simplify the graphic symbols and extract the most representative patterns. When simplifying the pattern, it is necessary to grasp the basic characteristics and structure of the original pattern, remove the complicated and trivial, and make the pattern look like the main body of the pattern while retaining its characteristic charm.(Lu Yachi; Wu Qian; Jin Bowen, 2019)

The simplified pattern is partially adjusted to exaggerate its characteristics, and modern elements are integrated into the extracted abstract pattern. The patterns of Mazu culture have been refined, simplified and then abstractly created, which not only retains the essence of Mazu culture, but also conforms to modern aesthetics.

Deformation is the soul of pattern design and the key to pattern innovation. Generally, fonts and logo graphics are used the most. The deformed design of traditional ornamentation often brings illusions to people. Optical illusions are wrong judgments and perceptions based on empiricism or improper reference when people observe objects. The objective perception of things limits the designer's design of

graphics, but we combine the shape of traditional decorations to create, and transform the key parts of graphics into traditional decorations. For example, the logo of "Far East Plaza Hotel Hong Kong Shang Palace" designed by Master Chen Youjian took the word "Gong" as the theme of creation, and used the font deformation and the symmetry of the moiré pattern to design the logo of the hotel. This design uses traditional calligraphy, and the symmetrical and deformed shape of the ornamentation shows the oriental charm of the hotel. (W Juchuan, 2017)



*Figure 10: "Far East Plaza Hotel Hong Kong Shang Palace"*

Source: Designed by Chen Youjian, 2015.

The existing cultural and creative products of Mazu include craft replicas, pen holders, luminous lamps and other cultural and creative products. In order to increase the popularity of Mazu culture and play an educational role, the patterns of Mazu culture are interpreted through the modeling context and symbols of cultural and creative products, so that the audience can understand Mazu culture, become the media of Mazu culture, and enrich the creative products of Mazu culture type is imperative. (Z Weifeng, 2018)

An ingenious and creative cultural and creative product can improve the popularity of Mazu in Meizhou Island and the spread of regional culture. In order to avoid the homogenization of Mazu cultural and creative products, we should grasp the image characteristics of the patterns of Mazu culture, and further vigorously excavate, research and design regional culture to enhance the sense of design and creativity. For example, design fashion products such as bags, cosmetic packaging, and clothing with the patterns of Mazu culture as the creative elements, and at the same time design Mazu cultural and creative products with archival significance, such as jewelry designed with gold or jade as raw materials. Mazu cultural and creative products are

cultural creative products, works of art and collections. They are secondary creations after the extraction of cultural elements.

### 2.5 Application cases of patterns in Mazu culture in contemporary society

The pattern in Mazu culture is a unique form of artistic expression with a very wide range of applications, which shows its important position in Mazu belief culture. In Mazu ceremonies, patterns are widely used in the decoration of sacrifices, treasure tents and other scenes, as well as painted on statues, miraculous sedan chairs, temples and other objects, becoming an important part of the entire Mazu ceremonies. Not only that, the patterns in Mazu culture are also widely used in daily life and architectural decoration, such as gatehouses, walls, roofs, etc. It can be said that the patterns in Mazu culture have been integrated into almost all aspects of people and have become a part of the culture of Hainan. **(Z Beibei, 2014)**

The scope of application of patterns in Mazu culture is not only in modern society, but also has a long history. As early as the Song Dynasty, Mazu belief had already been prevalent. With the passage of time, Mazu belief gradually spread in the South China Sea Islands, which gradually expanded the influence of Mazu culture, and the patterns in Mazu culture also began to spread to the world. Today, various patterns of Mazu culture can be seen not only on temples and dwellings in various parts of Hainan, but also on some architectural decorations in other places. It can be seen that the influence of Mazu cultural patterns is very extensive and also It proves the artistic value and historical value of Mazu culture. At the same time, these patterns have also become an important symbol to display Chinese traditional culture and Hainan regional culture.

In addition to the application in Mazu culture, the patterns in Mazu culture have also been widely used commercially. Nowadays, patterns in Mazu culture can be seen everywhere in various handicrafts, souvenirs, gifts, etc. These works of art not only show the charm of Mazu culture, but also have high commodity value. The patterns in Mazu culture have also become an important part of traditional handicrafts and economy in Hainan, making positive contributions to the sustainable economic and cultural development of contemporary society. **(Z Feifan, 2020)**

The application range of patterns in Mazu culture is very wide and lasting. It is not only an important part of Mazu belief culture, but also one of the important ways to understand and inherit Chinese traditional culture and Hainan regional culture. The patterns in Mazu culture not only have profound cultural connotation and historical value, but also have high artistic and commodity value, and are indispensable cultural and economic resources in Hainan.

#### 2.4.1 The application of Mazu culture patterns in cartoon design

In the process of designing the cartoon of Mazu's portrait, the designer chose the positive image of Mazu to create. Mazu's prototype is Lin Mo, a woman from the folk, so the image design adopts female characteristics. The modeling features of Mazu's phoenix crown and clothing are simplified. According to the sacred status obtained by Mazu, nine strings of beads hang from the design of the phoenix crown. The overall lines are smooth and graceful. Mazu's face is a smiling expression, which is cute, approachable and generous, in line with Mazu's image of "Niangma", with distinctive and prominent features. In the use of colors, red and orange are mainly used, because Mazu often wears red clothes in literature, and at the same time, red also represents celebration in traditional Chinese culture, expressing people's infinite yearning for Mazu. (Z Weifeng, 2018)



*Figure 11: Mazu cartoon shape.*  
Source: Scanned by Wang Hui, 2020.

#### 2.4.2 The application of the pattern of Mazu culture in the sachet

For traditional Mazu believers, the incense bag is more of a personal guardian, placed in a purse or personal clothing, and used to pray for safety. Today, Mazu believers are all over the world, regardless of gender and age. The personal preferences of contemporary believers are different from traditional believers, showing a variety of characteristics. According to these characteristics, an open development design can be adopted to meet the needs of more believers. For example, the popular incense bags in the market should be designed for different age groups.



For young believers or tourists, incense bags can be made into mobile phone pendants, bracelets, car hangings and even dolls. (Z Weifeng, 2018)

The modern incense bag is designed in the shape of a wallet, which can not only hold Mazu to keep you safe, but also have the function of a wallet, killing two birds with one stone. Made of pure cotton and bordered with gold thread, this purse sachet combines the benefits of rustic cotton with dazzling gold thread. The lining is pure color cotton cloth, which feels a bit rough, but it is still relatively environmentally friendly and healthy. In the use of design colors, red and orange are also used as the main colors to design, while highlighting the cultural connotation of Mazu, it seems a little too traditional and not strong enough in fashion sense. The decorative patterns around the wallet are too single, just simple repetition and crossing, and the connotation is not enough. The use of theme materials highlights the Mazu culture. Although it is a cartoon shape, it is still too realistic, and the sense of modernity and fashion is not enough. (L Ni, 2020)



Figure 12: The pattern of Mazu culture in the sachet.

Source: Scanned by Wang Hui, 2023.

#### 2.4.3 Application of Mazu culture patterns in gift box design

The concept of gift box design is still in line with the development trend of the current tourist souvenir market. Souvenirs occupy a place in China, a country that values etiquette. Souvenirs with Mazu cultural characteristics can become a fashion. The design of this gift box takes into account the overall aesthetic feeling, and the use of colors is reasonable and coordinated. The creative products in the gift box are as close to life as possible and pursue practicability. There are 5 small items including stickers, key chains, mobile phone lanyards, safety charms and bookmarks, which are exquisite and compact. The downside is that the grade of the product and the cost

performance of the gift box design are not high. Targeted consumer groups are relatively vague.



*Figure 13: Mazu gift box.*

Source: Photographed by Wang Hui, 2023.

#### 2.4.4 The application of the pattern of Mazu culture on bedding

The belief in Mazu entrusts people's yearning and pursuit of a better life. Believers worship Mazu and look forward to being protected by Mazu, and the family is happy, safe and auspicious. Choose the bed that is closest to people's life for the design of cultural and creative products, implying that Mazu will always be by your side. The pillow in the picture is embroidered with Mazu's pattern, as if Mazu is by your side and can appear whenever you need it. With a pillow, you can embrace a peaceful and happy life. This is a beautiful moral, but also a good wish. The theme of the cartoon-style pattern is many children and many blessings. When people go to Meizhou Island to worship Mazu, they often ask for something, to bring home the blessings of Mazu. (L Lifang, 2018)



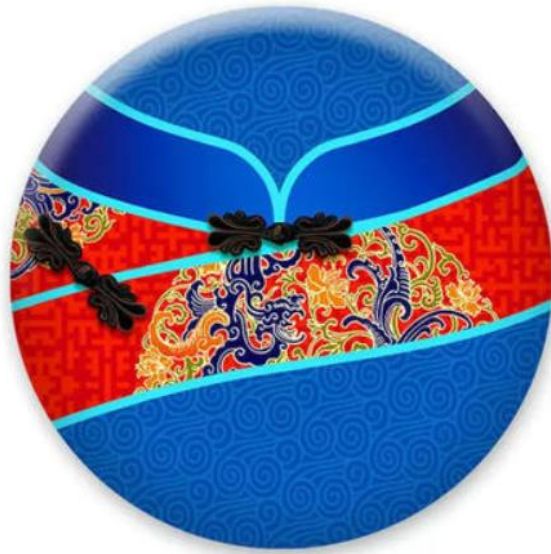
*Figure 14: Mazu pillow.*

Source: Photographed by Wang Hui, 2023.

#### 2.4.5 The application of the patterns of Mazu culture in pattern design

Meizhou women's clothing is also called "Mazu clothing", which is an important embodiment of Mazu culture in clothing and is deeply influenced by Mazu culture. The sea blue sloping Chinese-style jacket represents the blue sea; while the red top and black bottom trousers are because it is said that Mazu loved to wear red trousers. She rescued fishermen at sea all the year round. Like black, but the upper half is still red, so it gradually evolved into a style with red on the top and black on the bottom. Red and black symbolize auspiciousness and longing respectively.

The LOGO design in the picture boldly chooses blue as the main color and red as the auxiliary color in Mazu's clothing. The round LOGO represents the essence of Mazu culture and implies the profound connotation of Mazu culture. The styling elements on the LOGO include dragon and phoenix patterns, wave patterns, etc., all of which represent the fusion of Chinese Mazu culture and traditional Chinese culture.



*Figure 15: Mazu LOGO.*

Source: Photographed by Wang Hui, 2023.

#### 2.4.6 The application of the pattern of Mazu culture on the emblem of the World Mazu Culture Forum

The emblem adopts a combination of graphics and text, and chooses deep blue as the main color, which intuitively reflects the profoundness of marine culture and the broad mind of Mazu, the goddess of peace at sea, who "establishes virtue, does good deeds, and loves all". In addition to the main color of blue, the emblem also ingeniously combines five colors of red, green, yellow and black, which symbolizes the widespread spread and tolerance of the Mazu spirit on the five continents of the world, and brings peace, unity and harmony to the people of the world. Energy fully expresses the theme of this forum. (Z Weifeng, 2020)

The main body of the emblem uses traditional Chinese brush calligraphy to outline the English pronunciation of Mazu. It not only shows the profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture, but also incorporates the aesthetic feelings of East and West, and contains the concept of harmonious coexistence of China and the West. After artistic treatment, the initial letter M of English MAZU is superimposed with the silhouette image of Mazu, making the theme of the forum of Mazu culture more intuitive and prominent.

The arc-shaped part below the emblem is a partial representation of the earth, which reflects the international vision of the forum and shows the height and regional influence of the forum. At the same time, the curved part is also reminiscent of the horizon of the sea-sky communication. The horizon is endless, symbolizing the lofty

ideals, good wishes and never-ending pursuit of life, conveying the humanistic care attribute of this forum.

It is particularly worth mentioning that the arc-shaped part below the emblem is also the silhouette of the Meizhou Ancestral Temple, indicating that the event was held in Mei Island, the hometown of Mazu. The English GMCF in the emblem is a combination of the initials of the English name of the World Mazu Culture Forum. The emblem is intended to present a world-class forum with profound heights. It is also hoped that Meizhou Island will become the permanent venue of the World Mazu Forum in the future, presenting to the world the image of the hometown of Mazu with profound heritage and colorful charm.



*Figure 16: The emblem of the World Mazu Culture Forum.*

Source: Designed by Yang Jinkun, 2020.

To sum up, with the development of tourism in Meizhou Island, the combination of Mazu culture and tourism has begun the development and production of Mazu cultural and creative products. The research on Mazu culture is becoming more and more popular, and people are also very enthusiastic about Mazu cultural tourism. High, but because it is still in the early stage of development, the category and quality of Mazu cultural and creative products are not high, the market recognition is still low, and the level of design is uneven. Not all are the same. The graphic symbols of Mazu culture are not highly recognizable in the society. It is urgent for us to stop from the perspective of development, think and study carefully, sort out and design modern graphic symbols of Mazu culture, so as to make better use of Mazu cultural creative products development and production. This will be of great help to the long-term development of Mazu culture and the high-quality development of Meizhou Island tourism.

### **3. The meaning and value of the new expression of the pattern of Mazu culture**

As one of the traditional Chinese folk beliefs, Mazu culture carries rich marine culture and traditional values of coastal areas. Patterns in Mazu culture are one of its important forms of expression. These patterns show people's worship of the goddess of the sea, Mazu, and their emotional identification with marine life with colorful elements and implication. These patterns not only have the meaning of religious belief, but also carry the value of cultural heritage, aesthetics, society and economy.

Mazu culture is a traditional Chinese folk belief. As the goddess of the sea and the protector of fishermen, Mazu is worshiped as the patron saint of fishermen. As an important form of expression, the pattern of Mazu culture shows the image of Mazu and related symbolic elements through images. These patterns are widely used in Mazu temples, ancestral halls, monuments and other buildings due to their unique visual effects, cultural implication and artistic value.(G Yayun, 2020)

The patterns in Mazu culture have important value in religious belief. As the goddess of the sea and the protector of fishermen, Mazu is worshiped by the people as the patron saint of fishermen. The head portrait of Mazu and related symbols in the pattern express people's reverence and devout belief in Mazu. These patterns are not just a decoration, but also a bond of communication and connection between people and Mazu. By watching and worshiping these patterns, people express their respect and prayers to Mazu, and seek Mazu's blessing and protection. This belief value makes patterns the core elements of Mazu temples, ancestral halls and other buildings, and also encourages people to actively inherit and promote Mazu culture in daily life.

First of all, the patterns in Mazu culture represent the unique characteristics of marine culture. Elements such as waves, ships, and fish are important symbols of marine culture, and they show people's love and admiration for marine life and fishermen's profession. These patterns are not only an expression of the natural environment, but also a continuation and inheritance of the marine cultural tradition. Through the dissemination of patterns, people's sense of identity with marine culture is strengthened, and people have a deeper understanding of cultural traditions in coastal areas.

Secondly, the patterns in Mazu culture carry the traditional values of coastal areas. Elements such as flowers and birds, auspicious clouds, dragons and phoenixes in the pattern embody the characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetics, endowing the building with a unique style and charm. These patterns show people's pursuit of beauty and aesthetic taste, and also represent the meaning of auspiciousness, blessing and happiness. This traditional aesthetic concept is reflected in the patterns. Through

the inheritance of patterns, people's cognition and appreciation of traditional aesthetics are improved.

In addition, the patterns in Mazu culture also reflect all aspects of social life in coastal areas. Elements such as fishing boats and fishing nets in the pattern reflect the importance of the fishery economy to the local society. These patterns are not only a tribute to the profession of fishermen, but also a blessing to the prosperity of fishery and social development. The display and inheritance of the pattern makes the residents in the coastal area more proud and recognizes their lifestyle and career choice, and also promotes the sustainable development of the local social economy.

Patterns in Mazu culture play an important role in cultural inheritance. The waves, ships, fish and other elements in the pattern represent marine life, fishery economy and the close connection between man and nature. These patterns convey cultural information through visual forms, showing maritime culture and traditional values of coastal areas. Through the decoration and display of patterns, people can feel the unique charm and profound heritage of Mazu culture.

First of all, the patterns in Mazu culture carry the historical memory and traditional culture of the coastal areas. As a traditional Chinese folk belief, Mazu culture embodies the wisdom and creativity of people in coastal areas. The waves, ships, fish and other elements in the pattern reflect the lifestyle of fishermen and the development of fishery economy. The presentation of these patterns on buildings, utensils and other carriers enables residents in coastal areas to understand their own history and cultural traditions through visual perception. The inheritance and display of patterns will help promote the cultural confidence and regional characteristics of coastal areas, and promote cultural inheritance and development.

Secondly, patterns in Mazu culture play an important role in cultural exchange and integration. As a representative of marine culture, Mazu culture has attracted the attention of many tourists and culture lovers. The marine elements and artistic expressions in the patterns have become a bridge for cultural exchanges, enabling people from different regions and cultural backgrounds to feel the charm and depth of marine culture through the patterns of Mazu culture. At the same time, the patterns of Mazu culture are also influenced and integrated by other regional cultures, creating a unique artistic style and aesthetic concept. This cross-cultural exchange and integration has promoted the multi-cultural development and inheritance.

In addition, the patterns in Mazu culture have played an important role in promoting the cultural identity and inheritance of the younger generation. In the rapid development of modern society, the younger generation's awareness and interest in traditional culture has gradually weakened. The patterns of Mazu culture have

attracted the attention and participation of young people with their unique aesthetic value and cultural connotation. The display and inheritance of patterns, by attracting the attention of young people, makes them interested in Mazu culture, and then in-depth understanding and research. The participation and inheritance of the younger generation has injected new vitality into the continuation and development of Mazu culture. (C Zuying, 2015)

The patterns in Mazu culture have unique value in terms of aesthetics. These patterns attract people's attention and admiration for their exquisite design, delicate workmanship and unique shape. The lines in the pattern are smooth, the colors are bright, and the composition is coordinated, showing a high artistic value.

First of all, the patterns in Mazu culture have unique visual effects. The curves of the waves, the majesty of the ships, and the agility of the fish are all subtly expressed in the patterns. Through the flow of lines and changes in shape, these patterns show vivid and lively visual effects, giving people a sense of aesthetic enjoyment and pleasure. The use of colors in the pattern is also extremely rich and varied, from bright red, yellow, and blue to soft green, purple, and pink, all of which are skillfully used in the pattern, adding a sense of layering and richness to the vision.

Secondly, the patterns in Mazu culture embody the characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetics. Common elements such as flowers and birds, auspicious clouds, dragons and phoenixes in patterns are common aesthetic symbols in Chinese traditional culture. With its exquisite composition and delicate expression, the pattern of flowers and birds demonstrates the techniques and artistic charm of traditional Chinese painting. The flow of auspicious clouds and the mystery of the dragon and phoenix show the auspicious and auspicious meanings in traditional Chinese culture. Through delicate lines and exquisite decoration, these patterns present a unique aesthetic value and show the unique charm of Chinese traditional aesthetics.

In addition, the patterns in Mazu culture also embody the combination of art and function. These patterns are not just decorative elements, but are part of the building, blending with the form and structure of the building. The layout and proportions of the patterns are carefully designed to make the building more harmonious and beautiful visually. The carving, painting and color painting of the patterns demonstrate the skills and artistic expression of the craftsmen, endowing Mazu buildings with unique charm and artistic value.

Patterns in Mazu culture are also of great value on social and economic levels. They are not just a medium of cultural expression, but also have a positive impact on society and the economy.



First, motifs in Mazu culture promote social cohesion and identity. As an important part of Mazu culture, patterns show people's recognition of traditional culture and regional characteristics. When people see the motifs of Mazu culture in the building, it creates a strong sense of belonging and identity, enhancing the cohesion and connection between the community and the residents of the coastal area. This common cultural symbol and value concept makes people more united and jointly inherit and promote Mazu culture.

Secondly, the patterns in Mazu culture can promote tourism and economic development. As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, Mazu culture has attracted a large number of tourists and culture lovers. Mazu temples, ancestral halls and other buildings have become tourist attractions with their unique Mazu cultural patterns, attracting a large number of tourists to visit and experience. This has brought opportunities for the development of local tourism and promoted economic prosperity. At the same time, the commercial development of Mazu cultural patterns has also brought business opportunities to related industries, such as the production and sales of souvenirs, handicrafts, and cultural derivatives, which have promoted the development of related industries.

In addition, patterns in Mazu culture also play a role in social education and value transmission. The meanings of auspiciousness and blessing in the pattern convey positive values to the society through the visual form. In the form of patterns, they tell people important social values such as cherishing marine resources, protecting the environment, and respecting traditional culture. This is of great significance for cultivating citizens' sense of responsibility and promoting positive energy in society, and provides positive guidance for social construction and harmonious development. **(C Fang; L Lijuan, 2020)**

Patterns in Mazu culture have multiple values, playing an important role from religious belief, cultural heritage, aesthetics to social and economic aspects. Through its unique visual effect, the function of inheriting culture, the characteristics of artistic aesthetics, and the promotion of society and economy, the pattern endows Mazu culture with profound significance.

The pattern in Mazu culture is an important link connecting people with Mazu belief and marine culture, and has rich religious, cultural, aesthetic and socio-economic values. Through visual expression and cultural inheritance, they let people feel the reverence of Mazu and the power of the ocean, and strengthen social cohesion and identity. These patterns show the unique charm and profound heritage of Mazu culture, and promote the inheritance and development of culture. At the same time, the artistic value and aesthetics of the patterns have attracted people's attention and

appreciation, and brought economic benefits to the development of Mazu architecture and related industries. The patterns also play a positive role in promoting social education and the transmission of values by conveying values such as auspiciousness and blessings. **(H Cheng, 2014)**

In order to protect and inherit the value of patterns in Mazu culture, it is necessary to strengthen relevant protection and research work. This includes restoring and protecting the patterns in Mazu's architecture, strengthening the inheritance and innovation of pattern art, promoting the research and academic exchanges of Mazu culture, and cultivating more professionals and inheritors. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen public education, improve people's awareness and understanding of the value of patterns in Mazu culture, and allow more people to participate in the inheritance and promotion of Mazu culture.

Patterns in Mazu culture are a unique cultural symbol and artistic expression. They connect people with Mazu beliefs, marine culture and coastal traditions through visual language and cultural inheritance. They are not only beautiful decorations, but also convey the wisdom, emotions and values of Mazu culture. Through the discussion and inheritance of the value of patterns in Mazu culture, we can better understand and understand the importance and influence of Mazu culture, and make Mazu culture shine more brilliantly in modern society.

### **Summary**

Patterns in Mazu culture are a very important part of marine culture, and they have always carried people's beliefs and wishes. However, in contemporary society, with the gradual disappearance of traditional culture, the patterns in Mazu culture have gradually lost their original inheritance and protection. Therefore, in order to protect the patterns in Mazu culture and pass them on, some effective measures need to be taken.

For the patterns in Mazu culture, its protection and inheritance of culture is particularly important. In this regard, the main measures are to carry out relevant cultural and educational activities so that more people can understand, recognize and pay attention to Mazu culture. At the same time, some Mazu patterns with cultural significance need to be further protected and inherited, and their cultural value should be expressed in new ways. For example, through museums, cultural exhibitions, etc., the patterns in Mazu culture can be displayed, and the protection and restoration of cultural relics can be strengthened.

In addition, commercial application is also an important way of pattern inheritance in Mazu culture. Today, more and more companies are beginning to use

Mazu patterns in product design, which brings new opportunities for the inheritance of Mazu culture. But at the same time, reasonable protection measures are also needed to ensure that the commercial use of Mazu patterns conforms to the laws of culture and art, and to avoid the commercialization of patterns from weakening the cultural value.

In short, the pattern in Mazu culture is undoubtedly a bright pearl in Chinese traditional culture, and we should pay more attention to its protection and inheritance. Only through various measures can we better pass on these ancient and precious cultural experiences to future generations.



## Chapter V

### Conclusion, Discussion and Suggestion

#### 1. Conclusion

The long history of Mazu belief provides us with valuable cultural resources, and the rich and splendid resources provide inexhaustible creative inspiration for our design creation. Among them, the graphic symbols of Mazu culture have continued the profound connotation of Mazu culture in this long cultural river, so that we can still see the elegance of Mazu culture today. From the perspective of semiotics, this article explores the deep meaning of the graphic symbols of Mazu culture and its relationship with humanities and society, deeply analyzes the main patterns in the patterns of Mazu culture, explores the rich connotations of patterns, and looks at the graphic symbols of Mazu culture from a developmental perspective. Then study the current situation and shortcomings of Mazu cultural creative products and design from the aspects of cultural communication and cultural creative products, list the current cases of application and creation of Mazu cultural patterns, and look for the development of Mazu cultural patterns and the feasibility of design, so that Mazu culture can be effectively promoted and disseminated on cultural and creative products, works of art, sculpture, architecture and other carriers.

In Mazu culture, patterns play a very important role, and each pattern has its specific symbolic meaning and expression. The common patterns in Mazu culture are mostly auspicious patterns, such as "dragon and phoenix present prosperity", "a hundred flowers bloom", etc. These patterns are endowed with deeper meanings in Mazu culture.

Among them, "Dragon and Phoenix Bring Prosperity" represents a happy marriage and life, implying that the husband and wife live in harmony, and also represents the prosperity and prosperity of the country. And "Hundred Flowers Blooming" represents the beauty and prosperity of the earth, implying the growth of all things, full of vigor and vitality. In addition, there are more patterns with their own unique symbolic meanings, such as "Birds Singing and Fragrance of Flowers" representing the beauty and comfort of life, and "Buddha's Radiance" representing tolerance, compassion, wisdom and so on.

The pattern expressions in Mazu culture are also very diverse. They are not only painted on the gates and walls of Mazu temples, but can also be applied to various art products such as ceramics, textiles, and metal utensils. Moreover, with the changes of the times and the development of society, the application range and form of patterns

in Mazu culture are also constantly developing. For example, the influence and contribution of Mazu culture can be seen in modern architecture, clothing, furniture and other fields.

Therefore, it can be seen that the symbolic meaning and expression of patterns in Mazu culture still have important value in contemporary society. In the future, the patterns in Mazu culture will be combined with more art forms to better demonstrate its unique artistic charm and cultural value, and continue to make greater contributions to the cultural construction and development of modern society.

## 2. Discussion

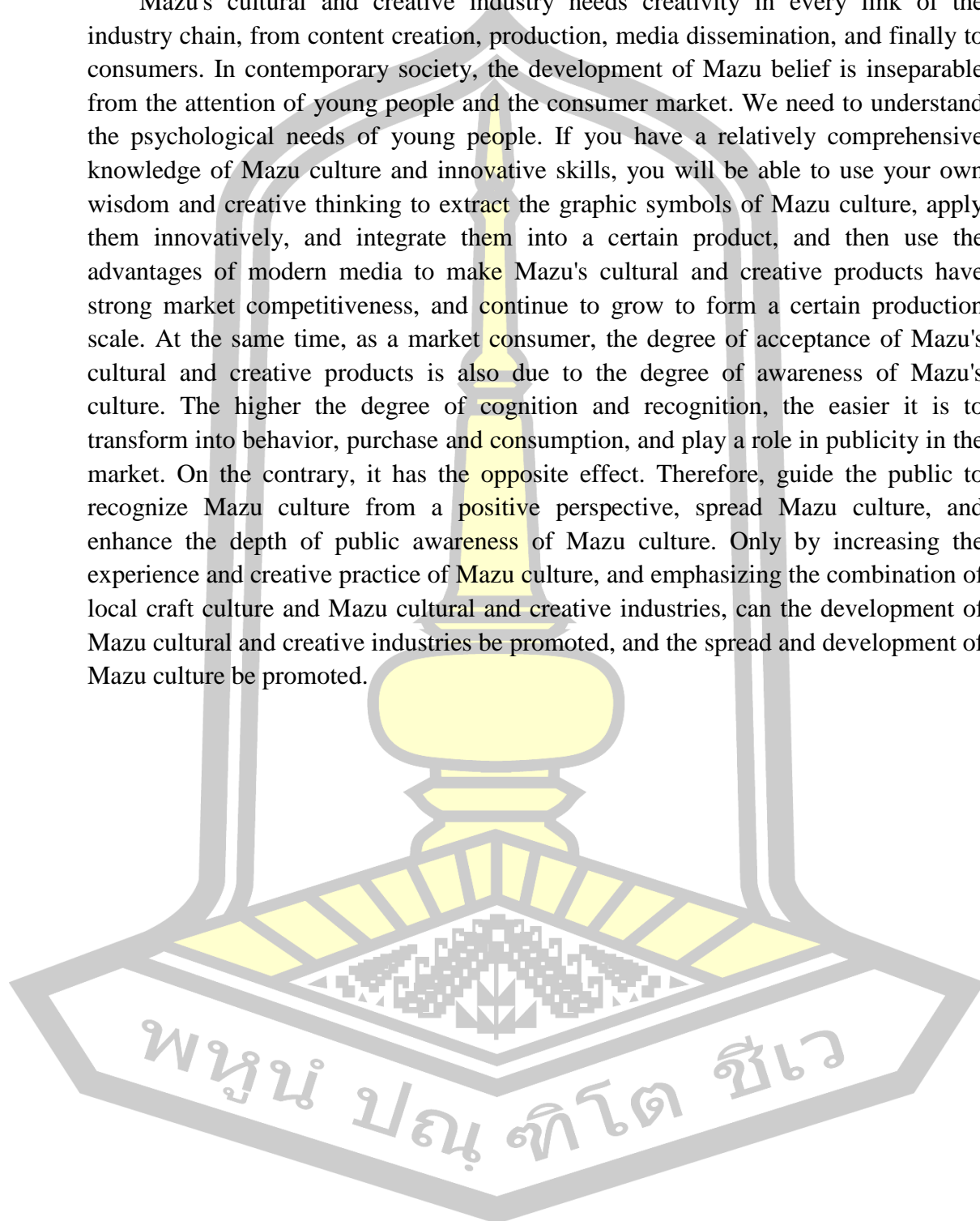
Patterns are one of the indispensable elements in Mazu culture. In contemporary society, patterns in Mazu culture are widely used in various industries. First of all, patterns in Mazu culture are widely used in the design of cultural and creative products. The traditional cultural elements contained in the pattern are cleverly used in product design, making cultural products more culturally rich and tasteful. Secondly, patterns in Mazu culture have gradually penetrated into architectural design. For example, the roof design of a building in Xiamen, Fujian Province adopts patterns from Mazu culture, making the building more characteristic of local culture. In addition, patterns are also widely used in clothing design, jewelry design, home decoration and other fields.

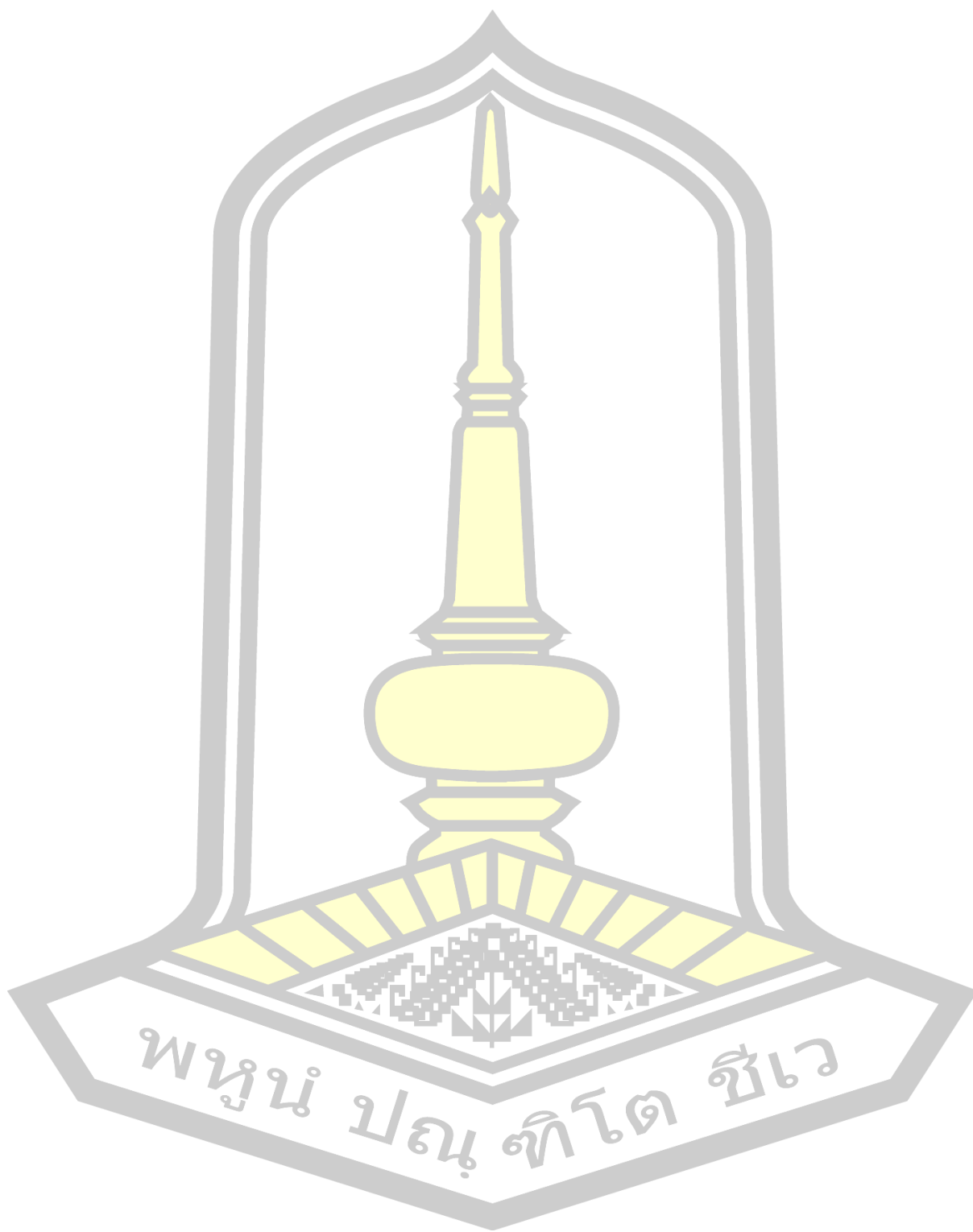
It can be predicted that the patterns in Mazu culture will continue to play an important role in the future development. With the improvement of the cultural quality of the whole people and the growing prosperity of the cultural and creative industries, the patterns in Mazu culture will have a wider application prospect. At the same time, the innovation and development of patterns is also a future trend. In addition to retaining traditional pattern elements, it is also necessary to use new design concepts and technical means to create more contemporary and innovative patterns.

In short, in the context of contemporary society, the application prospects and development trends of patterns in Mazu culture are worthy of research and discussion. In the future, we should continue to strengthen the research and excavation of Mazu culture, so that traditional culture can be inherited and developed. At the same time, it should also promote the innovation and development of pattern design, integrate traditional elements with modern design, and promote the healthy development of cultural and creative industries.

### 3. Suggestion

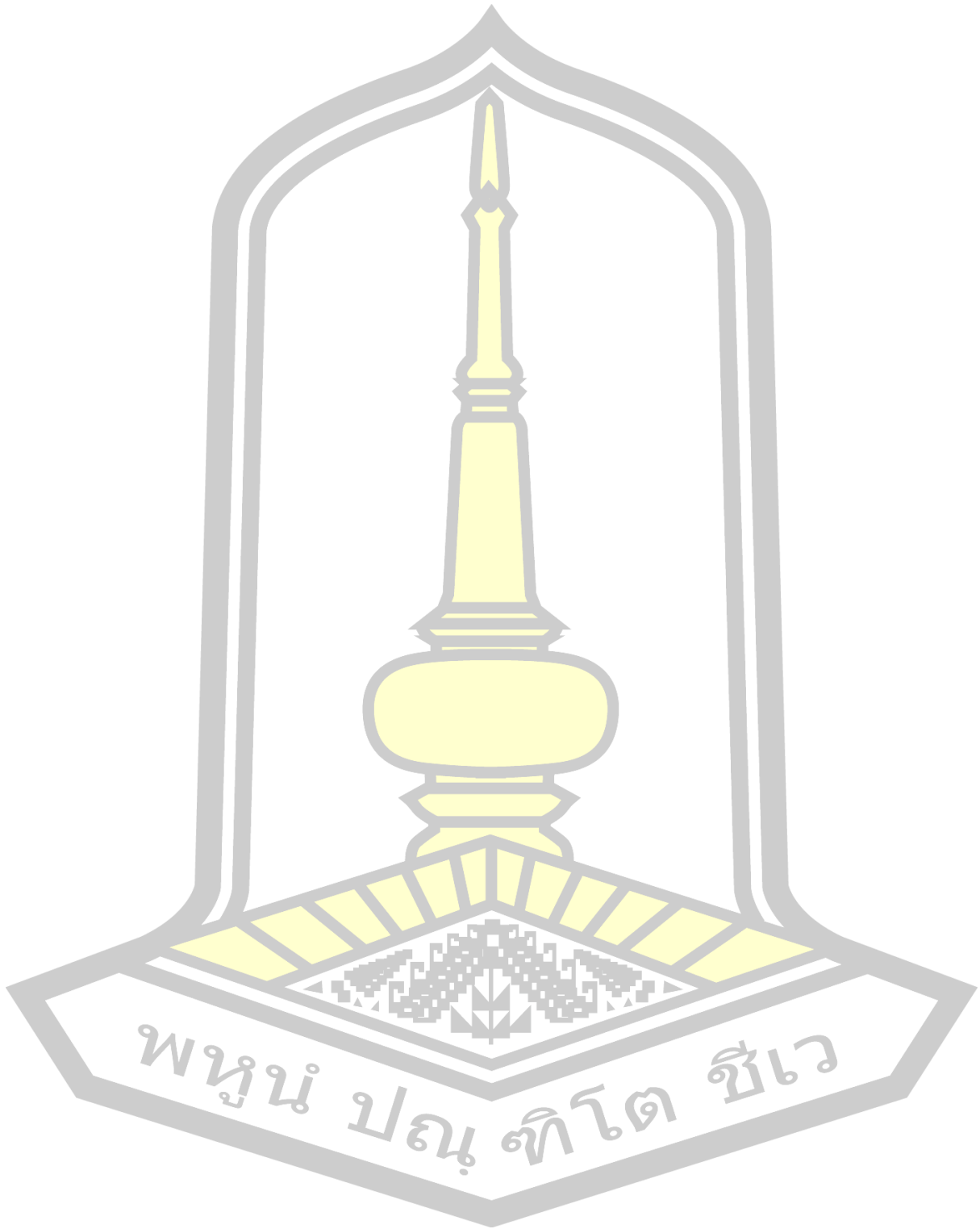
Mazu's cultural and creative industry needs creativity in every link of the industry chain, from content creation, production, media dissemination, and finally to consumers. In contemporary society, the development of Mazu belief is inseparable from the attention of young people and the consumer market. We need to understand the psychological needs of young people. If you have a relatively comprehensive knowledge of Mazu culture and innovative skills, you will be able to use your own wisdom and creative thinking to extract the graphic symbols of Mazu culture, apply them innovatively, and integrate them into a certain product, and then use the advantages of modern media to make Mazu's cultural and creative products have strong market competitiveness, and continue to grow to form a certain production scale. At the same time, as a market consumer, the degree of acceptance of Mazu's cultural and creative products is also due to the degree of awareness of Mazu's culture. The higher the degree of cognition and recognition, the easier it is to transform into behavior, purchase and consumption, and play a role in publicity in the market. On the contrary, it has the opposite effect. Therefore, guide the public to recognize Mazu culture from a positive perspective, spread Mazu culture, and enhance the depth of public awareness of Mazu culture. Only by increasing the experience and creative practice of Mazu culture, and emphasizing the combination of local craft culture and Mazu cultural and creative industries, can the development of Mazu cultural and creative industries be promoted, and the spread and development of Mazu culture be promoted.





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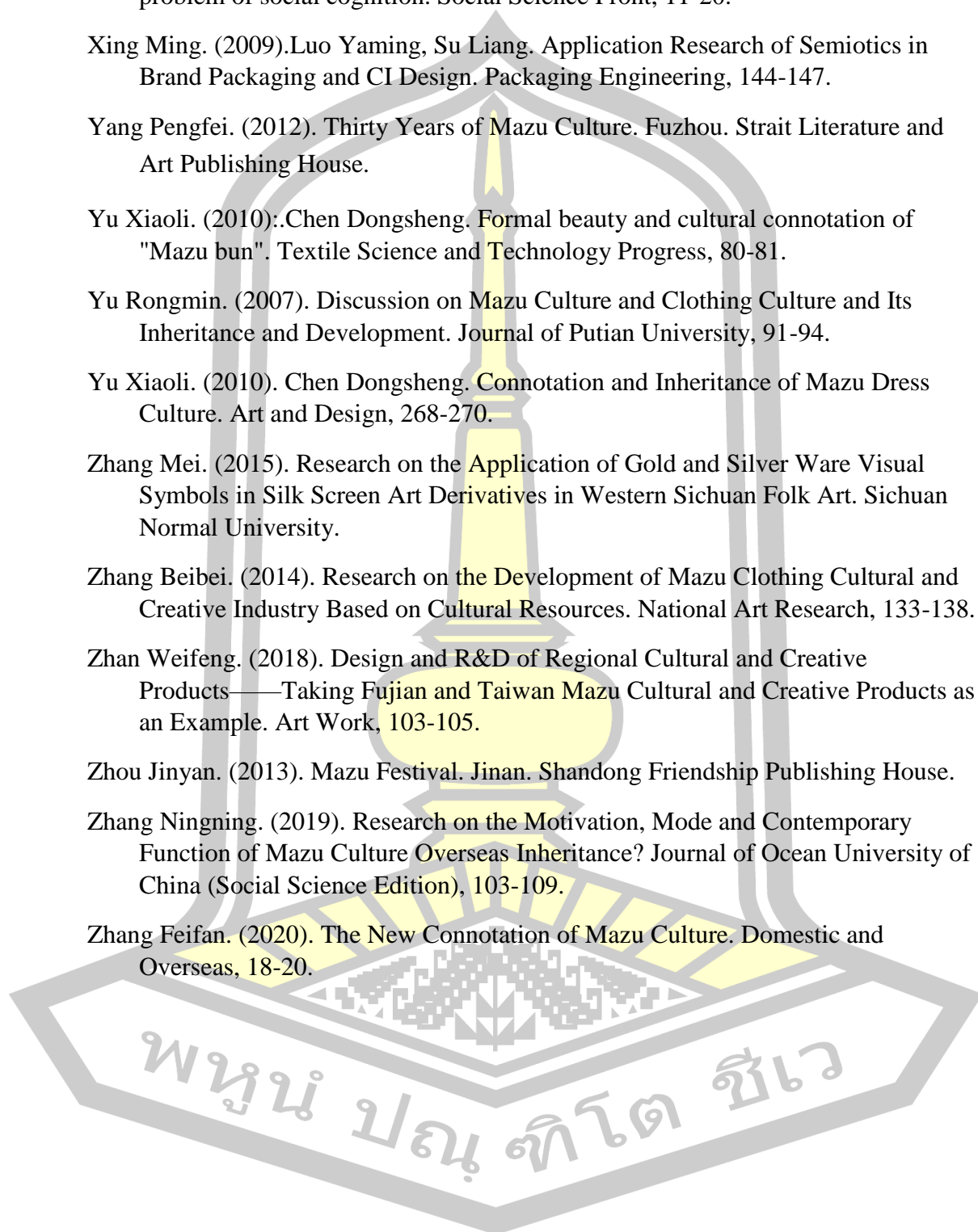




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## BIOGRAPHY

**NAME** Wang Hui

**DATE OF BIRTH** 30 March 1999

**PLACE OF BIRTH** Putian

**ADDRESS** Chengxiang District, Putian, Fujian Province, China

**EDUCATION** 2021, Bachelor's Degree from Putian University, majoring in Visual Communication Design, China  
2024, Master's Degree from Mahasarakham University, majoring in Fine and Applied Arts Research and Creation, Thailand

