



Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a
Minority in the Context of Modernity

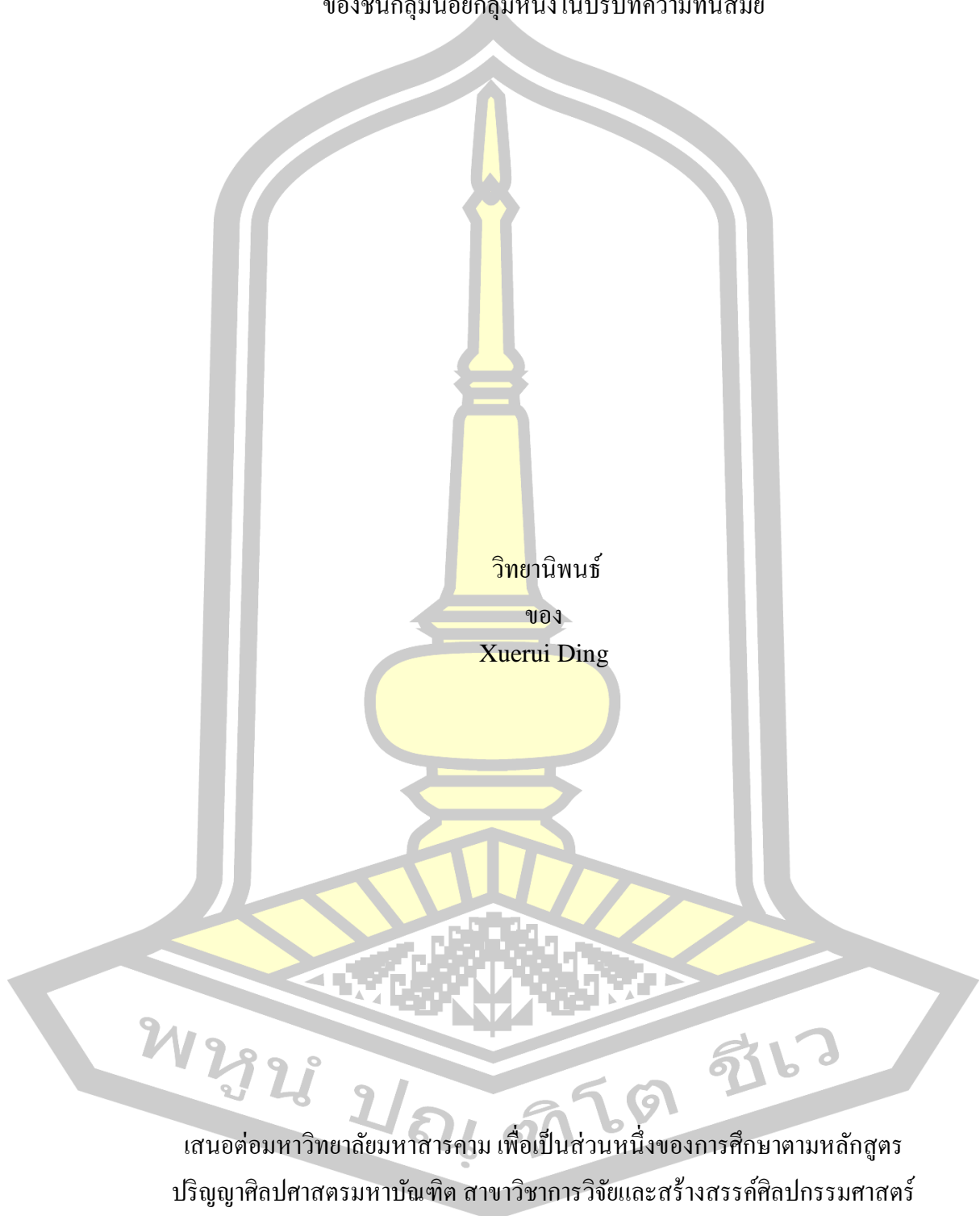
Xuerui Ding

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

August 2023

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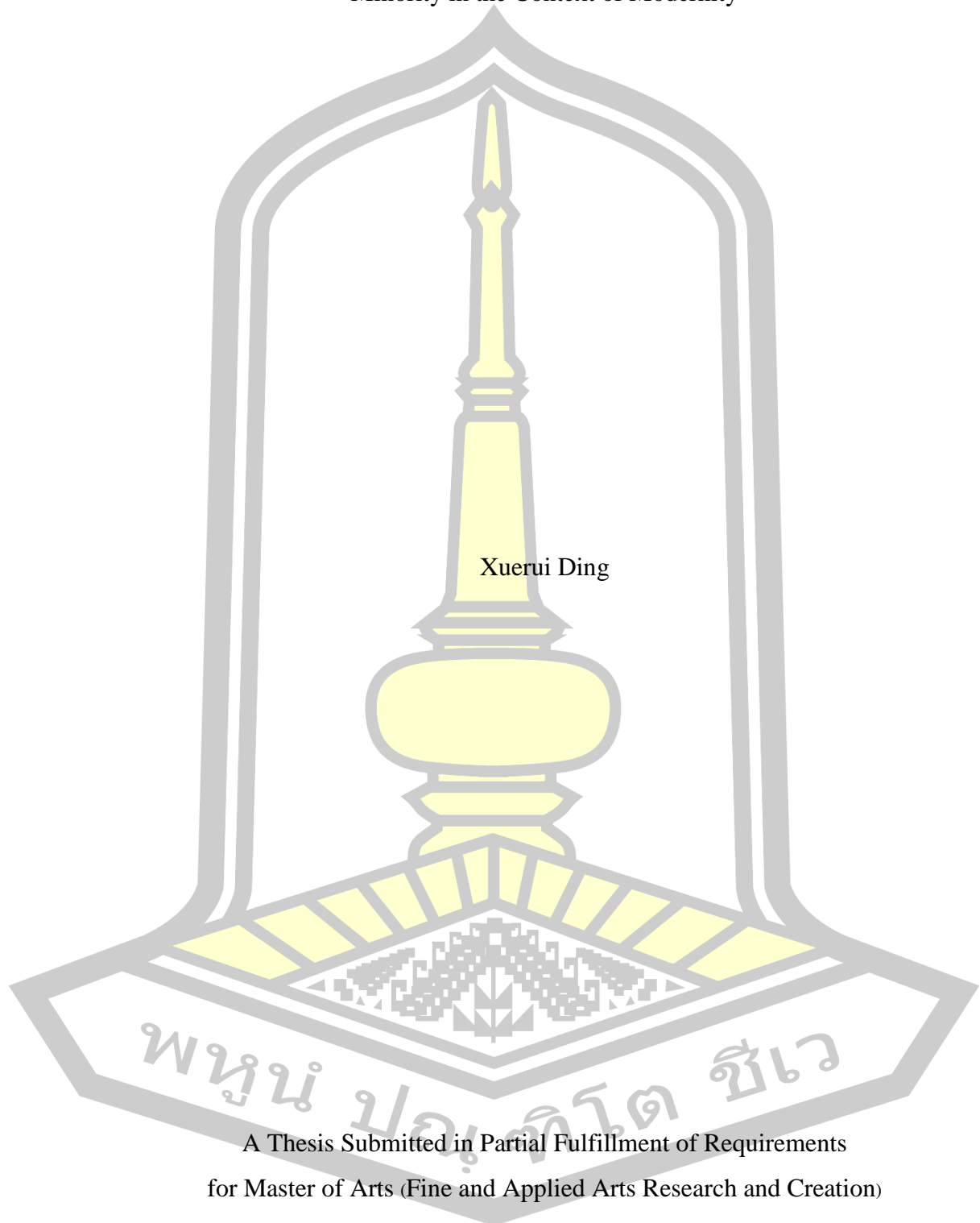


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Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a
Minority in the Context of Modernity



Xuerui Ding

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
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ABSTRACT

Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a Minority in the Context of Modernity' is qualitative research. There were four research objectives: 1) To study the historical development of Yi people at Liangshan Province; 2) To study costumes in the dimension of the ethnicity and material culture; 3) To study Yi's costume in the dimension of commoditization ;4) To study modern fashion from Yi's costumes in the context of modernity. This study uses the Yi costumes in Liangshan Province as its basis. Through the development history of Liangshan Yi clothing, the researcher analyzed the ethnic identity and expressions underlying Liangshan Yi clothing. Data were collected from documentaries, interviews, and general observations. and participatory observation. The research results are as follows:

Liangshan is a province located in the southwestern part of China. Liangshan is the largest settlement area of the Yi ethnic group, one of the oldest minorities in China. However, the Liangshan Yi can be classified into three subgroups. Geographical characteristics have

influenced the cultural identity of the Yi people. Especially the dress that has a unique identity. Currently, the clothing of the Yi minority is distinctive. Each Yi style, pattern, color, and pattern on the clothing are distinctive. The costumes have become a mark for judging the specifics of the region. The Yi people have different rituals, festivals, and Yi costumes to wear in their special lives. And different levels and ages of the Yi people have strict instructions on wearing costumes and accessories. And the use of this special attire created a special national identity for the Yi people. In the context of modernity Policies encourage and support minorities in expressing their ethnic identity to the outside world, which has become a cultural capital used to develop products to generate income. Thus causing the phenomenon of cultural tourism influences, the Yi people have been receiving benefits from their traditional costumes. It has promoted the economic development of the Liangshan region. In the process of trade, the Yi people and outside groups are closely connected, and in order to meet the aesthetic needs of contemporary people, a large number of professional designer groups have begun to integrate costume elements. Traditional Yi meets modern fashion elements. It has become part of modernity, exhibiting on a higher international stage through model walks, etc.

This study will further study the Yi costume culture in the context of modern China from an anthropological and sociological point of view. and presents a great treasure of Yi apparel to the world which can serve as a research model for studying other minority crafts in China and the world.

Keyword : Yi Costumes, Ethnic Identity, Self-Identity Representation, Modernity

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Time flies, and in the blink of an eye, two years of postgraduate study from 2021 to the present will come to an end. There is a distance of 2,271 kilometers from Liangshan State, Sichuan Province, China, to Mahasarakham, Thailand. I am honored to have crossed the distance of 2,000 kilometers to complete my master's degree at Mahasarakham University in Thailand. Looking back, there are so many mentors and friends who accompanied me, encouraged me, helped me, and left the most precious memories with me on my learning and growing path.

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Xuerui Ding

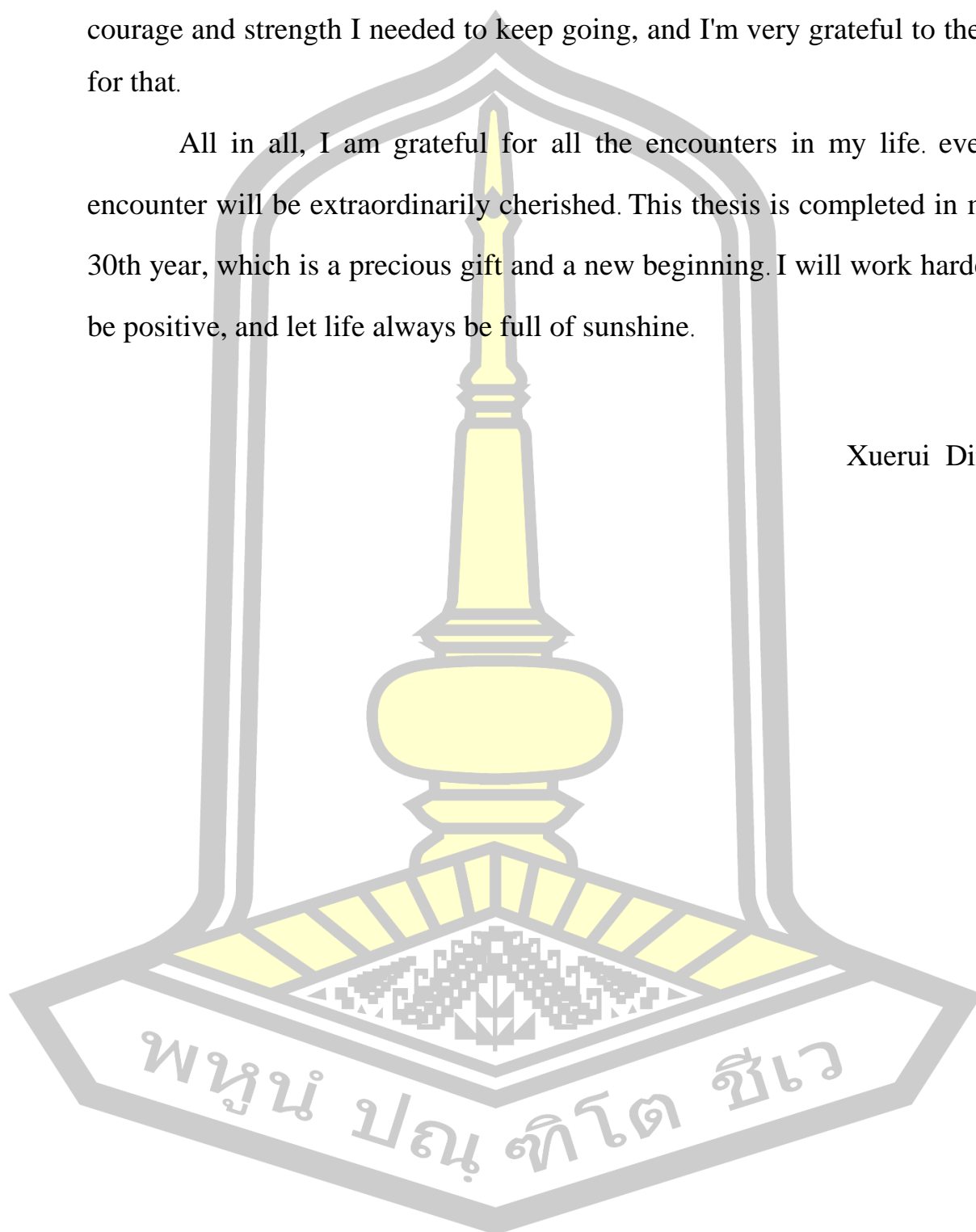


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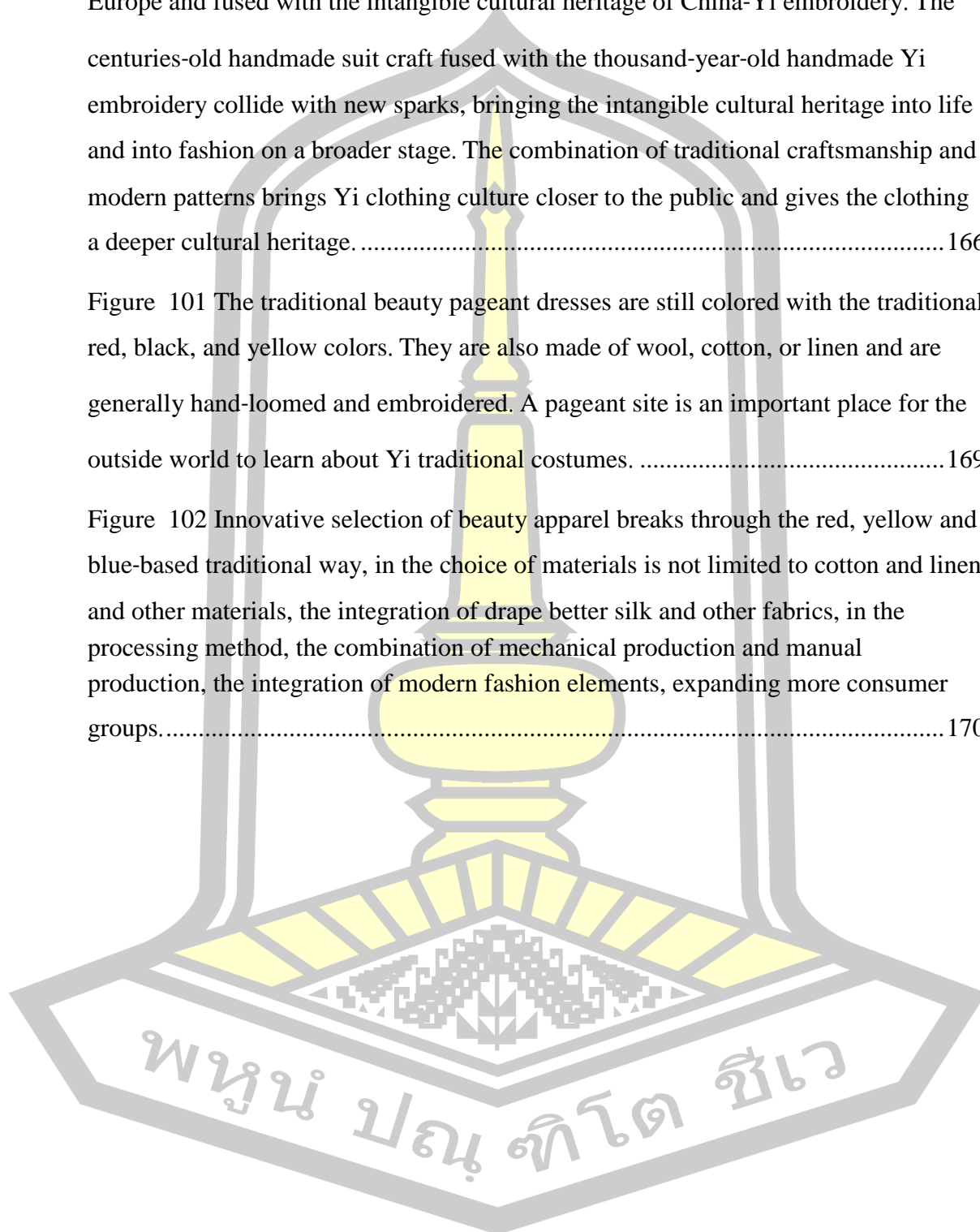
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Figure 101 The traditional beauty pageant dresses are still colored with the traditional red, black, and yellow colors. They are also made of wool, cotton, or linen and are generally hand-loomed and embroidered. A pageant site is an important place for the outside world to learn about Yi traditional costumes. 169

Figure 102 Innovative selection of beauty apparel breaks through the red, yellow and blue-based traditional way, in the choice of materials is not limited to cotton and linen and other materials, the integration of drape better silk and other fabrics, in the processing method, the combination of mechanical production and manual production, the integration of modern fashion elements, expanding more consumer groups..... 170



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Liangshan Yi costume is the costume of the Yi people, the largest minority group in the Liangshan region of Sichuan Province, China. It is a material culture that expresses the unique national cultural identity of these people, and at the same time, in the context of modernity, the Yi people express themselves externally through their costumes, which have become modern fashion and commodities through reprocessing and design.

Liangshan city belongs to Sichuan Province, China. It is located in the western part of Sichuan Province. It has an area of 60,000 square kilometers, a complex geographical environment and frequent natural disasters. Still, the physical area looks like the only way to get to Yunnan and other Southeast Asian countries. Liangshan has a total population of more than 4 million people. It consists of 10 ethnic groups such as Han, Yi, Tibet, Mongolia, etc. Due to its high altitude, complex terrain, and frequent natural disasters, the Liangshan region has a complex geographical environment. Therefore, in terms of the overall natural environment and survival conditions, Liangshan Prefecture can be said to be the most difficult region in southwest China in terms of the survival environment and has become one of the poorest areas in China. Over the years, Liangshan has been the focus of the world's attention because of its poverty and has become the place that General Secretary Xi Jinping is most concerned about. Liangshan is little known because of its poverty, but in fact, the beautiful Liangshan has not only a long history but also a splendid culture and a colorful ethnic flavor.

The Yi is the sixth-largest ethnic minority in China and one of the oldest ethnic minorities in the country. According to the latest statistics in 2021, the population of Yi in China has reached more than 9 million, mainly in China's Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangxi provinces. Liangshan Prefecture has a total population of 5.21 million, of which 2,887,500 are Yi people, accounting for 54% of the total population, making it the largest Yi settlement area in China. The Yi people have developed a unique cultural tradition in the special natural and social environment of Liangshan Prefecture. For historical and geographical reasons, foreign cultures have had very little influence on it, and it is because of this natural geographical barrier, the self-integration of the social system, and the relatively slow economic development that the ancient traditional culture of the Liangshan Yi people has been preserved intact here.

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The Yi people have their own writing, calendar, music, dance, and costumes, and costumes, as the most direct expression of culture, can effectively give us an understanding of the cultural history of a people. The Yi have a wide variety of costumes, with a wide range of colors and more than 300 styles, making them the most popular among Chinese ethnic groups. Experts and scholars agree that no single ethnic group in the world has a greater variety of costumes than the Yi, but more importantly, all of these costumes come from the mountainous areas of the Yi and are made by folk craftsmanship, which is the national identity of the Yi people shown through their costumes.

According to relevant records, there are currently more than 300 different styles of Yi costumes in China, and each style has many types depending on age, wedding, funeral, and grade. Therefore, it is beyond reproach to say that there are thousands of Yi costumes. The Yi costume has a history of thousands of years, and there is a lot of evidence from archaeological excavations and history books. For example, the mural painting of the tomb of Huo of the Eastern Jin Dynasty in Houhaizi, Zhaotong, Yunnan, unearthed in 1963, depicts the heroic bun and the wearing of felt, which are still inherited by the Yi people in Liangshan today. Like the history of mankind, the costume of the Yi people has a gradual progression from simple to complex. Yi costume, as a cultural symbol worn on the body, is not only a material product of the Yi people's life as they adapt to their natural environment, but it is also an external cultural representation accumulated throughout their history and cultural process. (Xu Yan, 2014)

Prior to the democratic reform of 1956, Liangshan maintained a slave society. Although slavery was dominant, there was no unified slave-owning regime, and the three major dialect areas of Yinuo, Shengzha, and Suodi were formed in Liangshan

because of the differences in region, language, and family clans. (Chen jingjing, 2017)The traditional Yi costumes of these different dialect regions have obvious regional characteristics, and the styles, patterns, colors, and styles on the costumes are distinctive and clearly differentiated, and the Yi people can often tell from the costumes which region the outsiders are from. The costume became a sign to judge the "outsider" area.

The Yi costumes of this period also reflect a distinct hierarchy. The materials, styles, colors, and patterns on Yi costumes are a kind of marker to distinguish social status, especially the black and white hierarchical symbolism in the colors used in costumes, which is obvious at a glance, and this hierarchical concept of black and white colors has continued to this day. During the slavery period, the Yi were divided into the Black Yi and the White Yi. The Black Yi, with their noble lineage, never intermarried with other family branches. The Black Yi's clothing is mainly beautiful in black, and the cloth used to wrap the head is longer and thicker than that of other Yi. The longer the skirt worn, the higher the status. The accessories on Black Yi's costumes are mostly handmade silver ornaments with exquisite workmanship, and precious ornaments such as onyx are used to embellish the costumes, which are elegantly colored and decorated mostly with sun and moon patterns, highlighting the nobility's unique wealth from the costumes. The White Yi were mostly slaves, had no freedom of life, and were ruled by the Black Yi. The clothes they wore were mainly made of cotton and linen, embellished with shells and beads, and colored with the natural colors of cotton and linen, and the skirts were generally short to facilitate production and labor. This special hierarchical division has shaped the way the Yi people use clothing to distinguish their status levels, and this style of dress, in which black is honored, is still popular in Liangshan Prefecture today.

The three major dialectal regions of the Liangshan Yi tribe are culturally similar, but each has its own characteristics. If we compare the Liangshan Yi to a mother, the three dialectal regions are her three children, similar in appearance but different in character, and this special division of dialectal regions has resulted in a unique Yi costume culture, which is also based on the Yi people's identity of their own ethnicity.

In 1956, the Party and the government carried out democratic reforms in Liangshan; slavery was abolished, Liangshan entered a new socialist stage, and the hierarchy of Liangshan Yi costumes gradually disappeared in the ideological liberation of "equality for all." The Yi people wear different Yi costumes for different ceremonies, festivals, daily life, and special life, while different levels and ages of Yi people have strict instructions on wearing costumes and accessories. This particular use of dress forms their special ethnic identity. For example, the traditional occupation of the Yi people is "Bimo." Bimo is the priest for Yi religious activities. On the occasion of a ritual, Bimo will wear specific magic clothes, a magic hat, etc. Bimo's

vestments are inherited and are a symbol of "magic power," which cannot be worn or touched by ordinary people. Normally, Bimo costumes would have a special place of worship and would only be worn by Bimo when performing rituals. The Yi people like to use black, red, and yellow in making Yi clothing. In Yi culture, black is the color of the earth, signifying the Yi people's respect and worship for the earth. Red is the color of life for the Yi people, signifying valor and passion. Yellow is the color of the sun, signifying the Yi people's pursuit of light and the future. The choice of colors on Yi clothing reflects the national beliefs of the Yi people. In terms of technique, the Yi people often use picking, embroidery, inlaying, and dyeing to create plant and animal patterns, which is related to the nature worship of the Yi people. The choice of colors on Yi costumes reflects the aesthetic psychology of the black and yellow beauty of the Liangshan Yi people, and the patterns and ornaments on the costumes also contain historical, religious, and folkloric traces, reflecting their various cults and the concept that everything is spiritual (Wang Zhenzhen,2012).

The unique use of costumes has formed the distinctive ethnic identity of the Yi people. With the use of Yi costumes for some special life and ritual occasions, the Yi people intend to express, through costumes, who they are and what distinguishes them from other ethnic groups. The costume serves as a symbol of their ethnic identity.

Since the reform and opening up in 1978, the state has increased its support for development, and the economy of the Yi region has developed rapidly. In the Liangshan region during this period, the traditional social forms faced disintegration and disappearance under the impact of a strong civilization. The division of labor in society, the commodity economy, communication media, and the wave of part-time jobs have separated many people from their original social identity attributes, and some of the best Yi costume craftsmen have begun to make a living by doing their craft full-time, while more people have become consumers. Yi costume making is no longer a product of collective standardization but is developing in the direction of individualization and diversification. On the one hand, the market has encouraged the evolution of traditional dress concepts, which has had a positive impact on the economy and society; on the other hand, it has created new challenges in the transmission of dress cultural heritage. The Yi costumes were made in this period with great changes in materials. For example, in the clothing store of the Yi people, "Jabazize," the choice of materials for Yi clothing has shifted from wool and cotton and linen to lighter, more drapeable, smoother to the touch chemical fibers and blended textiles. In her store, there are two rooms: the inner room is used for hand embroidery and machine sewing, while the outer room is used for daily operations and communication and also displays some finished and semi-finished garments. During this period, Yi clothing changed from being worn by insiders only to becoming a product for sale. The function of Yi clothing, the mode of production, and

the properties of the product itself were transformed, reflecting a reinvention of tradition.

At the time, Yi costumes, which used to be worn only by the native Yi people, began to come onto the market. This signifies the reinvention of the tradition the ethnic identity of the Yi people. It came into being at the time when the costume was originally used by the Yi people and has ever since been passed down from generation to generation. Reinvention in my research project, it refers to functional changes to costumes during the process in which they were passed down and used. Originally, it was produced to be worn by the native Yi people only. However, it was later traded as a commodity by the Yi people with the rest of the world. This is the reinvention of tradition.

After 2000, the Chinese government began to implement the Western Development Strategy, which brought Liangshan into modernization, in the context of modernity and under the minority development policies of the national and local governments. Minority communities have made efforts to represent their self-identity by commodifying their culture, especially through ethnic cultural tourism. Ethnic minorities in Liangshan present their costumes and cultural identity to tourists and visitors to generate income. This context affects your ability to revive, reinvent, and present yourself to others in a diverse and interesting way. Driven by a series of government policies and measures to enrich the people and benefit the farmers, in 2014, Yi costumes were approved by the State Council to be included in the fourth batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list. The government promulgates relevant laws and regulations on Yi costumes to encourage and support individuals and groups to participate in the protection, inheritance, and development of Yi costumes. Since then, many designers with professional backgrounds have joined the Liangshan Yi costume industry and created their own ethnic clothing brands. From the perspective of aesthetic anthropology, they advocate that traditional Yi clothing is an important form and medium for Yi compatriots to perceive the world and beauty, and that innovative Yi costumes should show the Yi youth's individual expression of fashion and unique national cultural and aesthetic needs. Therefore, in the selection of fabrics, colors, and patterns, they strive to be closer to the life, work, and leisure of current consumers, emphasize brand awareness, use a modern enterprise management and sales model, and bring Yi costumes to a larger stage, promote the development of the Yi costume market, and promote the development of the economy of the Liangshan region.

Every year, a large beauty pageant is held in Liangshan Prefecture, and many tourists from both domestic and foreign countries come to see the handsome Yi boys and girls. During the pageant, boys and girls will wear the Yi people's traditional

costumes and show their talents. In each session of this competition, many different styles of Yi costumes will be displayed, and the suit of clothes that wins the "Best Costume Award" will be highly sought after by everyone, setting the trend for people's style of dressing. The cultural tourism and products generated by traditional Yi costumes have brought some economic benefits to Liangshan.

In the context of modernity, there are many policies that encourage ethnic minorities to showcase and express their culture to the outside world, so that it can become cultural capital and be used to develop products and generate income. In this context, the Yi people have become connected to the outside world, and they express their ethnic identity through their costumes. In the process of expression, they gain benefits and generate cultural tourism and creative products, which also reflect the reinvention of a tradition that refers to the ethnic identity of the Yi people and is created along with the use of costumes and passed on to the present day. This is a kind of reinvention of tradition. Reinvention means that in the process of inheritance and use, what was originally an item for daily wear by the Yi people internally has now become a commodity for trade between the Yi people and outsiders, and the production process and production method of the clothing for sale to outsiders, as well as the properties, functions, and meanings of the product itself, have all changed, which is reinvention. In the process of commercialization, Yi costumes have become a kind of cultural capital, and the local people show and express their culture to the outside world through sales, production, and cultural tourism, thus gaining revenue and promoting the economic development of the Liangshan region. In the context of modernity, with the acceleration of commercialization, Yi costumes are no longer just a commodity. In order to adapt to modern aesthetics and expand the consumer base of Yi clothing, many professional designers have begun to combine this ethnic clothing with modern fashion elements, and after redesigning and reprocessing, Yi costumes have become a kind of fashion that is displayed on a larger international stage, making Yi costumes a modern fashion.

To sum up, the Yi costume culture has its own heavy sense of history and reflects the national material and spiritual culture of the Yi people. Yi costumes carry the history and culture, religious beliefs, aesthetic awareness, and craftsmanship of the Yi people and are an extremely important intangible cultural heritage. After thousands of years of inheritance and development, Yi costumes have shown two important issues in academic circles, namely, ethnic identity and self-expression. In the lives of the Yi people, there are many life practices, such as ceremonies, festivals, daily life, and special life, that are associated with costumes and through which the Yi people build their national identity. As China's development gradually enters modernization, the government has implemented a series of policies to enrich the people and benefit the farmers, and the policy encourages support for ethnic minorities to display and

express their culture to the outside world in order to become cultural capital for developing products to generate income. In this context, the Yi people became associated with the outside world, and the Yi people expressed themselves externally through their clothing, and Yi clothing became fashionable through reworking and design.

Based on the background and phenomena described above, this study adopts a qualitative research approach, utilizing the concepts of ethnic identity and self-expression. The reasons for choosing Yi costume as a research text for this study are as follows: Firstly, the author herself was born in the Liangshan region as a child, where the Yi costume culture and art of the three major dialect regions are gathered, and as a local person, it is my responsibility to further study the theories related to Yi costume so that more people can understand Yi culture. Then, because of my job, I am a local university teacher in Liangshan, and at the university where I work, there is a foundation and a professional team dedicated to the study of Yi costume culture, which facilitates my ability to collect and organize relevant data, which helps me a lot in the research process. At the same time, most of the Yi costume research going on right now is focused on giving basic information about the phenomenon. For example, researchers look at the colors, craftsmanship, and other aspects of Yi costume. Therefore, after consulting with my supervisor in the early stages, there was a great deal of research space for me to be inspired, and he suggested that I should conduct a new interpretation of Yi costume culture from the perspective of ethnic identity and self-expression. Because of these factors, I decided on the research direction and theme of my master's thesis, and during the later stages of thesis writing and fieldwork, I also collected and organized relevant data, read a lot of literature and books, and, with the help of my professor, I was able to think about and study Yi costume culture in a new field in depth and specifically. At the same time, by further studying Yi costume culture in the context of Chinese modernity from an anthropological-sociological perspective, the author also hopes to show the world the great treasure of Yi costume.

Purposes of Research

There are 4 Purposes as follow:

1. To study the historical development of Yi people at Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province.
2. To study Yi's costumes in the dimension of the ethnicity and material culture.
3. To Study Yi's costume in the dimension of commoditization .
4. To study modern fashion from Yi's costumes in the context of modernity.

Research questions

1. What is the impact of the development history of the Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture on the costumes of the Yi people? What has changed in Yi culture? How do the Yi people construct their national identity through Yi costumes?

2. How is the ethnic identity of the Yi people expressed through their costumes?

What kind of material culture is embodied in the Yi costumes?

3. How has the Yi costume changed during the process of commercialization?

4. In the context of the modernity of China, the government has been promoting ethnic minorities to take income from their Self-representation. How does the self-representing themselves through the ethnic Identity of Yi costumes? And how did others relate and have the representing the Yi costumes of ethnic minorities to the world, and how does it affect the Yi costumes culture of minorities in the Liangshan area?

Definition of Terms

1. Yi Costumes

Liangshan Yi costume is the costume of the Yi people, the largest minority group in the Liangshan region of Sichuan Province, China. It is a material culture which is text of this research. The researcher considers Yi clothing holistically in the dimensions of self identity in the bodily practice and represents their self identity to others at the same time.

2. Ethnic Identity

Ethnic Identity in this research means the identity of the Yi ethnic minority group in relation to the minority costume in both daily life and rituals. Research focuses on considering the costume, which is a material culture that indicates the self-identity of the Yi group in various dimensions.

3. Self-Representation

Self-representation in this research means the Yi minority presents themselves through their costume to others in a modern context. This research considers self-representation in the case of commoditization and modern fashion in relation to yi costume.

4. Context of Modernity

"Context of Modernity" in this research means the context of modernity in China today. In the context of this modernization, China has a policy of restoring cultural identities and developing economics from such identities in various ways. Therefore, the context of modernity is a national social context that directly affects the phenomenon of ethnic identity and self-representation of a minority through the Yi costume in this research as well.

Scope of Research

1. Research area

Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China

2. Period

2.1 Liangshan Prefecture before the democratic reform in 1956

2.2 Liangshan Prefecture after the implementation of democratic reforms in 1956

2.3 Liangshan after the reform and opening up in 1978

2.4 Liangshan Prefecture, which implemented the Western Development Strategy after 2000

3. Another

Main place : The research field consists of the Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture

Sub place: The three major dialect areas of Yi costumes in Liangshan Prefecture.

The first is the Yinuo dialect area represented by Meigu. The second is the Shengzha dialect area represented by Xide. The third is the Suodi dialect area represented by Butuo.

Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative research methodology. Collect research data by field working and document studies. Analyze through the humanities and social science concepts. Present the research result in a descriptive analytical, accompany the photographs and line drawings. To explained research methodology as follows:

1. Population and groups

The research topic "Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a Minority in the Context of Modernity " included several research populations. They can be classified by population structure which relate to the text of research as follows:

1.1 Local Yi people in Liangshan

The native Yi people of Liangshan Prefecture, who have lived in the region for a long time, are important players in witnessing the historical development and changes of Yi costumes in the context of Yi cultural development, and are the constructors of national identity.

1.2 Government Officials

Government officials here are local government officials and national government officials. It plays an important role in policy formulation and implementation, making Yi costume a Chinese intangible cultural heritage. At present, they also play a supervisory role in the relevant departments of the local government, such as those on ethnic development and those on cultural tourism.

1.3 Researcher and scholar of ethnography

Ethnographers here are scholars who specialize in the study of the Yi and Yi culture.

1.4 Cultural tourism groups

The cultural groups here mainly include the public sector, social organizations and tourists who consume Yi costumes.

1.5 Businessmen

Traders here are those who are engaged in the sale of Yi costumes. There are various forms of Yi costumes selling stores in various areas of Liangshan Prefecture, and they sell their goods as Yi costume customization, visitor rental, and custom photo services.

1.6 Researchers

Yi costumes have attracted many researchers. For example: cultural researchers, sociologists, designers, models, etc. Their contributions to the study of Yi costumes will bring more and more attention to Yi culture.

1.7 Fashion designers and Modellings

The government promulgates relevant laws and regulations on Yi costumes to encourage and support individuals and groups to participate in the protection, inheritance and development of Yi costumes. Since then, many designers with professional backgrounds have joined the Liangshan Yi clothing industry and created their own ethnic clothing brands.

The designers create Yi costumes, which are worn by models and presented to the outside world. These are two important reference groups in my study of the concept of self-expression.

2. Instrumentation /Tools for data collecting

2.1 Motion Figure (cameras, video recording equipment)

2.2 Voice record

2.3 Field notebook

3. Data Collection

3.1 Field work

Interview : Formal interview, Informal interview, Focus group interview.

Observation: Normal observation (or general observation), Participatory observation.

3.2 Documentary data collection

4. Data Analysis

4.1 To set the group of data relates 4 research objectives.

4.2 To descriptive analysis by four mains of concept; consisted ethnicity, material culture, commoditization, fashioned body

5. Research presentation

5.1 Thesis: Descriptive Analysis and Figures. (Full paper)

5.2 Research article: Publishing in international journal level of "scopus".

Literature Review

Through the collection and organization of related literature, it is clear that current research on Yi costume culture has two main features. First, more research is

done from the perspectives of history, folklore, beliefs, craftsmanship, production, and costume characteristics. Second, less research is done on Yi costume culture from the perspectives of anthropology and sociology.

1. Literature Review on research text

After deciding on my research text, I began to study carefully the treatises on the study of Yi costume culture. There are many writings on the study of costume in China, among which Mr. Shen Congwen's *Study of Ancient Chinese Costume*, which can be said to be a must-read reference for the study of the history of costume culture, composes the costumes of various Chinese dynasties from a historical perspective and briefly talks about the Yi costumes of the Qing Dynasty, which provides an important basis for the study of ethnic costumes. Since the start of New China, there have been many books about Yi culture in China. Different scholars have looked at Yi costume culture from different points of view.

In terms of cultural studies, scholars mainly rely on the fieldwork situation to conduct in-depth excavations of ethnic costume culture. In this regard, Yunnan's costume research has been very fruitful. The main one is Mr. Cheng Zhifang's book, *Yunnan Ethnic Communities*. The former has vivid figures and detailed content, carefully describing the details and styles of 26 ethnic minority costumes and depicting vivid Yi costume patterns, while the latter focuses on the history of costume development and representative styles of various ethnic groups in Yunnan. Among them is a detailed explanation of the horse-tassel flower in the Yi costume pattern, on which the author spares no ink or brush to elaborate and exaggerate. In addition, the author gives a detailed and very specific description of the materials and processing methods of the garments. Other works on Yi costume culture include *A Study of Yi Culture and Art in Liangshan*, edited by Wei Anduo. This work collects some papers that have achieved academic results in the study of Liangshan Yi culture, in which Liangshan Yi costume culture is studied as a separate topic and the cultural value of Liangshan sugar costumes is explored in depth. In terms of dissertations and journals, there is Ma Xiaohua's "Study on the Costume Culture of the Liangshan Yi People in Sichuan Province" from Central University for Nationalities, which analyzes the connotation of costume culture from the transmutation of costumes and gives a detailed description of the costume culture of the Liangshan Yi people. In addition, there are several papers, such as Feng Min's "Art of Liangshan Yi Costume," "The Culture of Sichuan Minority Costumes," and Li Lan's "Research on the Art of Liangshan Yi Costume," which deeply study the culture of Liangshan Yi costume, covering many aspects such as the overview and development and changes of Liangshan Yi costume.

From a historical perspective, many scholars have used the history of costume as evidence to support their investigations into the history of the Yi people. For example, the ancient civilization of the Yi people is explored with the help of ancient Yi texts and folklore relics, and the history of the ancient civilization of the Yi people is explored in Heza Wuniu's *History of the Ancient Civilization of the Yi People*, which contains a large amount of information on the ancient costume of the Yi people and examines the origin of Yi costume. The *History of Yi Culture*, compiled by Bai Xingfa, introduces the development of Yi culture in terms of its ethnic origin, language and writing, religious beliefs, customs and habits, and literature and arts, with a brief overview of Yi costume culture. Some scholars have explored the ethnographic value of Yi costumes in light of the historical development and heritage of the Yi people. The most typical of these is Mr. Fang Guoyu's *Manuscript on the History of the Yi People*, which provides a valuable historical resource for the study of Yi ethnic culture by sorting out Yi historical documents from three aspects: the ethnic origin of the Yi people, the geographical environment of the Yi people, and the historical process of Yi society. Among the related papers and journal materials, Zhang Ying's "Cultural and Geographical Study of Yi Costumes in the Southwest of the Ming and Qing Dynasties" and Huang Jin's "A Brief Discussion on the Changes and Inheritance Factors of Yi Costumes" both provide detailed analysis and discussion on the historical changes and inheritance of the Yi costumes in Liangshan.

In addition to this, there are also discussions on the aesthetic and artistic characteristics of Yi costumes from the perspective of aesthetics and art. For example, in Xiao Qing and Zhang Shengbing's edited book, "Exploring the Philosophy of Art and Art of Minorities in Southwest China," the thesis analyzes ethnic costumes as cultural representations for artistic analysis and explores and sorts out the cultural connotations of the aesthetics of minority art from the cultural phenomena of the minority groups in southwest China. The aesthetic characteristics of Yi costumes are analyzed from the perspective of the study of costume aesthetics in the study of Chinese ethnic costume culture by Dai Ping. Although I have seen a wide range of studies on the costumes of the Yi people in Liangshan in the past, covering various aspects of the historical, cultural, social, and folkloric characteristics of the costumes, there are relatively few anthropological and sociological studies on the costumes of the Yi people, and most of them are scattered studies. For example, Zhang Jianhua has written a unique book entitled "The Great View of Yi Culture," which studies patterns in costumes from an anthropological perspective and provides some brief introductions to the representative patterns in Yi costume customs. Many scholars have conducted anthropological studies on costumes based on the original religious beliefs and cultural background of the Yi people. For example, Fu Shouzong's "Yi Sheep Culture and the Book of Lucky Symbols" is an in-depth study of the origin of the "sheep" pattern and even its influence on the formation of the Yi people's

worldview and outlook on life. In addition, the book *A Study of Yi Ji Fu*, co-authored by Zhu Bingxiang and Pu Zhen, focuses on subtle and specific things, discussing the meaning of the motifs from the life of the Yi people and the sources, including the influence on the life and thought of the Yi people.

2. Literature Review about research concept

Through the above-mentioned literature, I found that no scholars have systematically studied Yi costumes from anthropological and sociological perspectives and through the representational properties of Yi costumes to see the ethnic identity and self-expression of Yi people, as well as through Yi costumes to see the relationship between Yi people and their communities and between Yi people and outsiders through costumes.

2.1 Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is one of the main concepts used by the researcher to study the Yi costumes process of ethnic minorities in Liangshan, China. I read *The Ethics of Identity* by Kwame Anthony Appiah. Race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, and sexuality: in the past couple of decades, a great deal of attention has been paid to such collective identities. They clamor for recognition and respect, sometimes at the expense of other things we value. But to what extent do "identities" constrain our freedom and our ability to live an individual life, and to what extent do they enable our individuality? In this beautifully written work, renowned philosopher and African Studies scholar Kwame Anthony Appiah draws on thinkers through the ages and across the globe to explore such questions. *The Ethics of Identity* takes seriously both the claims of individuality-the task of making a life-and the claims of identity, these large and often abstract social categories through which we define ourselves. What sort of life one should lead is a subject that has preoccupied moral and political thinkers from Aristotle to Mill. Appiah develops an account of ethics here that connects moral obligations with collective allegiances, our individuality with our identities, rather than just this venerable sense. As he observes, the question of who we are has always been linked to the question of what we are. Adopting a broadly interdisciplinary perspective, Appiah takes aim at the clichés and received ideas amid which talk of identity so often arises. Is "culture" a good thing? For that matter, does the concept of culture really explain anything? Is diversity valuable in itself? Are moral obligations the only kind there are? Has the rhetoric of "human rights" been overstretched? Finally, Appiah's arguments make it more difficult to imagine the world as divided between the West and the Rest; between locals and cosmopolitans; and between Us and Them. The result is a new vision of liberal humanism-one that can accommodate the vagaries and variety that make us human. In the life of the Yi people, there are many life practices such as rituals, festivals, daily life, and special

life that are all related to clothing. The Yi people express who we are and what makes us different from others through clothing. Through clothing, I saw their national identity.

2.2 Self-Representation

The term "self-representation" is a conceptual term that was created to describe questions like "What to do?" and "How to act?" "Who to be?" In the previous literature review on "Ethnic Identity" and "Self-Representation," in the framework of my research, "Ethnic Identity" explains what the Yi costume culture in Liangshan is, and "Ethnicity Identity" explains how the Yi costumes are used in daily life and special life in the context of modernity. How the insiders of the ethnic group express who they are through the Yi costume culture and how the outsiders express the inner culture of the ethnic group to the outside is an academic issue of sociology and psychology, so I choose to further my topic.

I have used the book "Modernity and Self-Identity, Self and Society in the Late Modern Age" by Anthony Giddens, first published in 1991 by Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Anthony Giddens (1991) described "Trajectory of the Self" as having the following essence:

The book focuses on the self and the emergence of new mechanisms of self-identity that are shaped by, but also shape, the institutions of modernity. The author argues that the self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences. Rather, when a person shapes his or her own identity, he or she directly affects the social impact of its effects and consequences, which are global in nature, no matter how local the situation in which it acts.

Yi costumes show something real about the self and self-identity in the world of modernity. The modern world is the development period of the western region after 2000. As my third concept, I will analyze and explain in the context of modernity how ethnic minority insiders, designers in the outside world, and so on, express the internal culture of the ethnic groups to the outside world. The concept of modern fashion may be redefined, and it is no longer the product of the voices of a few people. Fashion should be a fluid and diverse form of self-expression.

2.3 Modernity

Modernity theory, It is a concept that helps to understand the changes in different societies. It is a concept that makes sense of the economic, social, cultural, and technological transitions.

I will use the concept of "modernity" to describe the context of modernity in China today. China is modern in terms of economy, technology, and socioculture. In particular, economic reforms had an important effect on China's development to be modern in all aspects, equal to that of a civilized country. While some technologies from China lead the world. More importantly, in the context of modernization, the current Chinese government has a policy to develop the national minority economy by presenting their cultural identity. This has resulted in the phenomenon of reviving the ethnic identity of Yi costumes and presenting oneself through the Yi costume culture of ethnic minorities in Liangshan, which is the main chapter in this research.

The book "Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology" by Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer (2002) describes modernity as follows:

The term "modern" has served as a reference point to distinguish "primitive" characteristics. The modern and the modernizing reference capitalism or industrialization.

"Modernity" refers to a pattern of progressive change in society. "pre-modern" or "traditional" to "modern" society. The theory of modernity stems from the ideas of Max Weber, a German sociologist (1864-1920). They applied this theory to explain the process of modernization within society in relation to the national context. As a result, this theory uses the country's internal factors as a foundation. by considering the transition from the "traditional" to the new, universal, and by developing in the same manner as more developed countries.

The theory of modernity refers to an attempt to identify the variables that lead society toward progress. Describe the stages of social development that lead to the nature of modernity. In globalization, this is related to the world system and the free market. However, modernity theory does not focus solely on understanding the process of change but also on responding to that change. It also takes into account the different levels of social dynamics within the country. Referring to the social structure, the complex external social relations of the country's development are directly dependent on globalization.

Globalization and modernity: modernity is a phenomenon that mirrors globalization and has the power to create global social unity. Globalization is related to the spread of modernity across borders. Therefore, globalization often determines the integration of economic, political, and social cultures. The main structures influencing other countries' modernization are, in particular, each country's economic goals. The goal of cultural tourism, which includes the presentation of ethnic cultural identity and identity, is to generate revenue for the people in addition to the positive

attributes of globalization. Globalization also has a negative impact. That is, a more modern and developed society will prevail. And it often results in disparities between the rich and the poor in different societies, especially in the big cities of developing countries.

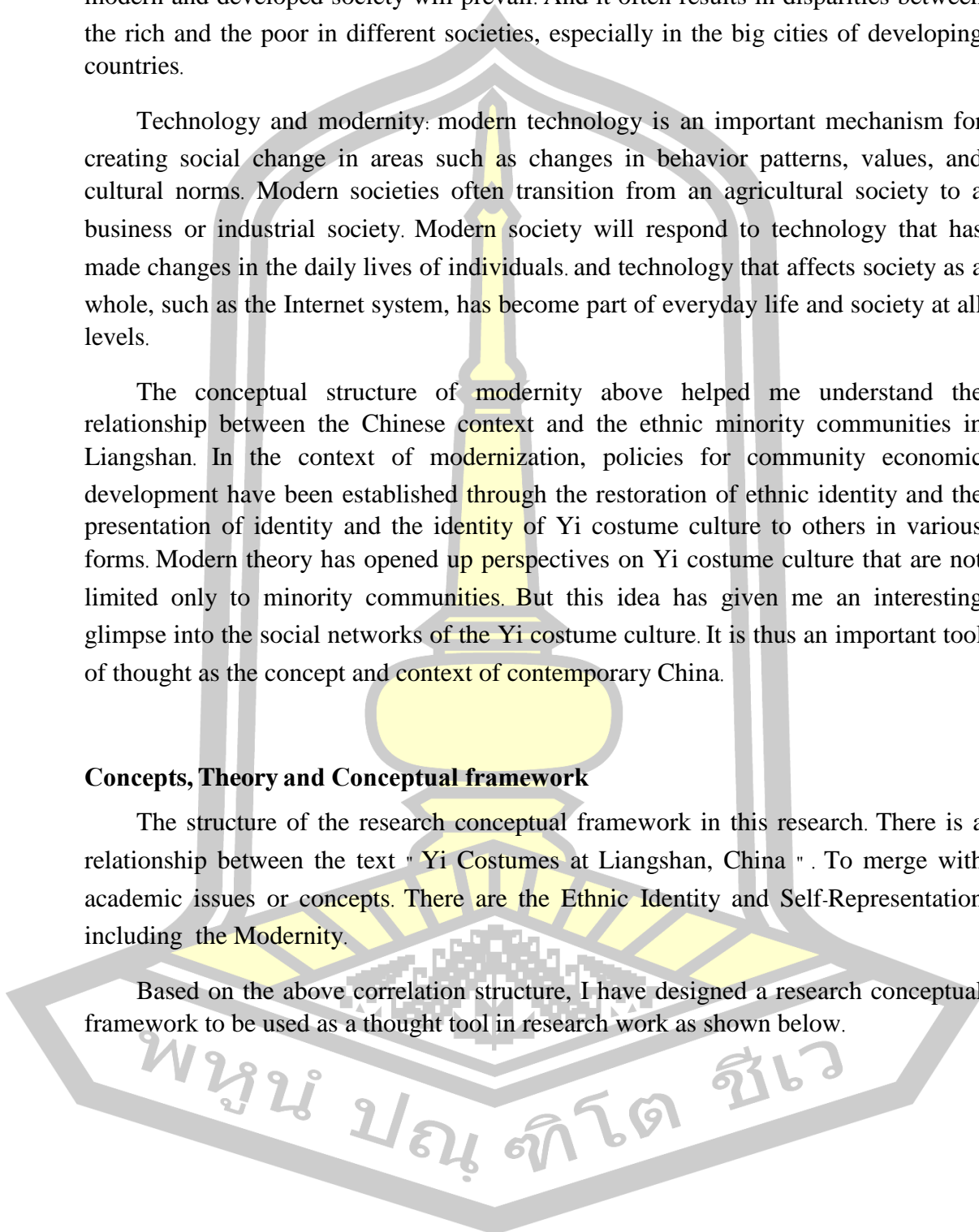
Technology and modernity: modern technology is an important mechanism for creating social change in areas such as changes in behavior patterns, values, and cultural norms. Modern societies often transition from an agricultural society to a business or industrial society. Modern society will respond to technology that has made changes in the daily lives of individuals. and technology that affects society as a whole, such as the Internet system, has become part of everyday life and society at all levels.

The conceptual structure of modernity above helped me understand the relationship between the Chinese context and the ethnic minority communities in Liangshan. In the context of modernization, policies for community economic development have been established through the restoration of ethnic identity and the presentation of identity and the identity of Yi costume culture to others in various forms. Modern theory has opened up perspectives on Yi costume culture that are not limited only to minority communities. But this idea has given me an interesting glimpse into the social networks of the Yi costume culture. It is thus an important tool of thought as the concept and context of contemporary China.

Concepts, Theory and Conceptual framework

The structure of the research conceptual framework in this research. There is a relationship between the text " Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China ". To merge with academic issues or concepts. There are the Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation including the Modernity.

Based on the above correlation structure, I have designed a research conceptual framework to be used as a thought tool in research work as shown below.



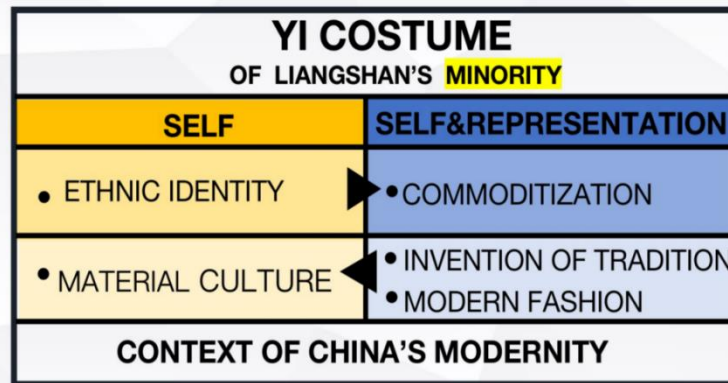


Figure 1 Figure 1 Frame of Structural Research The study text is the Yi costume of Liangshan Prefecture, which is a material culture, and the conceptual framework is divided into two parts, left and right. The section on the left explores how Yi people construct their ethnic identity through their dress. On the right is a discussion of Yi people's self-expression to the outside through their ethnic identity constructed through Yi dress in the context of modern China.

Source: Ding Xuerui , Designed 2022

Benefit of Research

1. Academic benefits : to raise the level of understanding of the costuming phenomena of the Yi people. Which are related to the past and the present including the relationship between self identity of ethnic group and modernity. Especially, this research design can be research model for studies the same issue on another place very well.

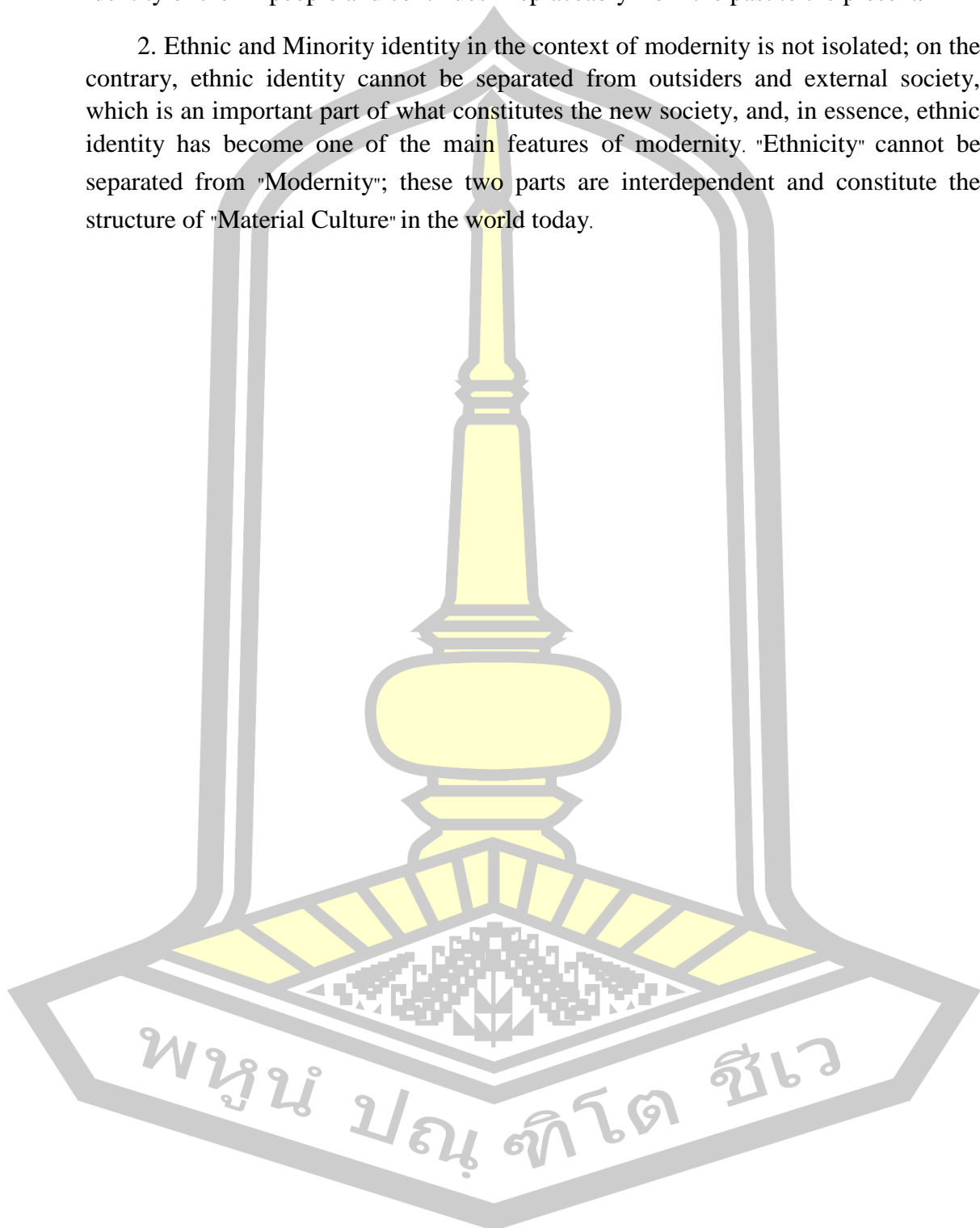
2. Benefit to the government and local people : the explaining the Yi garment phenomenon through this post-modern qualitative research get complex answers and thorough in relation to the context of modernization in China. The findings and databases can be utilized in policy making, operational development of Yi people and their costumes in various dimensions.

New Knowledge of Research

1. Ethnic identity is important to both individuals and society, and it can affect social identity, cultural heritage, political status, and personal identity. The Yi have a different cultural ideology from other ethnic groups in China, and the Yi have a strong sense of ethnic identity, which is reflected in the wearing and application of Yi clothing. From the analysis, Yi clothing is an artistic phenomenon created by cultural relationships and interactions, and the Yi have a close connection with it. For the Yi

people, Yi costume has an artistic status that reflects the most prominent ethnic identity of the Yi people and continues irreplaceably from the past to the present.

2. Ethnic and Minority identity in the context of modernity is not isolated; on the contrary, ethnic identity cannot be separated from outsiders and external society, which is an important part of what constitutes the new society, and, in essence, ethnic identity has become one of the main features of modernity. "Ethnicity" cannot be separated from "Modernity"; these two parts are interdependent and constitute the structure of "Material Culture" in the world today.



CHAPTER II

Historical Development of Yi people at Liangshan District, Sichuan Province

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the history and socio-cultural development of the Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture, China. In the history of Yi costumes, the author only elaborates on the history and development of the Liangshan Prefecture as a basis for the phenomena described in the subsequent chapters. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is an introduction to the geographical and human environment of the Yi people in Liangshan, which has given rise to the unique Yi costume culture. The second part is an introduction to the development of the Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture in different social contexts (before and after the founding of New China), how Yi dress became the national identity of the Yi people, and what historical developments and changes it underwent in the process. The third section describes the modern development of the Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture, whose culture has been commodified, modernized, and fashioned, and whose functional structure has changed.

Part 1: Physical space and settlement Community of the Yi people

1.1 Geographical Location and Geographical Features

Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture,¹ located in the southwest of Sichuan Province at 100°15' to 103°53' E and 26°03' to 29°27' N, covers an area of 60,100 km², extending to the Dadu River in the north and Jinsha River in the south, bordering Sichuan Basins in the northeast, and adjoining Hengduan Mountain Ranges in the west. Once a vital region for the "Tibetan-Yi Peoples' Corridor" and the ancient "Southern Silk Road," Liangshan Prefecture is invested with a diverse and complex terrain that descends from the higher northwest to the lower southwest and features ranges of multi-peaked mountains, varied lengths of rivers, interspersed basins, and dotted highland lakes. Nowadays, the Chengdu-Kunming Railway and the Yaxi Express Highway run across Liangshan prefecture from the north to the south, and the

¹Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture is one of China's administrative divisions, with the same administrative status as prefecture-level cities, regions and leagues, and is a prefecture-level administrative region under the jurisdiction of provinces and autonomous regions, and is a prefecture-level ethnic autonomous place established in China in the areas where ethnic minorities live.

Qingshan Airport sits in its middle, linking Liangshan to the outside world. Liangshan Prefecture, with fifteen counties and two county-level cities under its jurisdiction, is inhabited by fourteen native ethnic groups, i.e., Yi, Han, Tibetan, Hui, Mongolian, Miao, Lisu, Dai, Naxi, Buyi, Zhuang, Bai, Man, and Tujia nationalities, of which the minority ethnic groups have a population of about 2,887,500, accounting for 54% of the total. It is the largest Yi ethnic group settlement in China.

In a narrower sense, "Liangshan" is an administrative division, referring to the largest Yi settlement in China, the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. In a broader sense, "Liangshan" is a geographical concept that refers to the Greater Liangshan and the Lesser Liangshan in Sichuan Province. The big and small Liangshan Mountains are bounded by the Huangmaogang area in Meigu County, Sichuan Province, and "Huangmaogang" is commonly used as the delineation line of the big and small Liangshan Mountains. West of Huangmaogang is the Huitong River, and east of it is the big Liangshan Mountain, which belongs to Zhaoge, Liangshan Prefecture. Huangmaogang, located to the east of the small Liangshan Mountains, is part of Liangshan Prefecture and the four counties of Leibo, Mabian, Pingshan, and Ebian, collectively known as the Lei, Ma, Ping, and E area in southwest Sichuan Province's fifth administrative region. (Lin Yaohua, 2018) The average elevation of Daliangshan Mountain is about 2000–3000 meters, with a gentle mountain trend and individual peaks reaching over 4000 meters, especially the highest in Xiaoxiangling with an elevation of 4791 meters. The average elevation of the Xiaoliang Mountains is about 2000 meters, and the mountains are steep, so there is a proverb that "Big Liangshan Mountains are small, while Xiaoliang Mountains are big." The Daliang Mountains are the hinterland of the Liangshan Yi people and the most densely populated area of the Yi people. The topography of the region is very complex, with mountains and plains interspersed with each other, basins and hills gazing at each other, the low southeast and high northwest making the surface undulating and turbulent, and with the highest elevation reaching 5,958 meters and the lowest 305 meters, such a huge disparity is breathtaking. The mountains as a whole develop to the southeast, with some river valley impact lands and plains scattered among the mountains, and the terrain becomes more open and flat along the course of the rivers to the southeast. More than four-fifths of the landforms here are mountains, followed by mountain plains, then hills, alluvial plains, and fractured basins, which are only about one-tenth of the total landforms. It has the largest agricultural area in the Hengduan Mountains, the Anning River Valley Plain. The total amount of food produced here has made it the second largest plain in the Sichuan Basin by leaps and bounds.

Since ancient times, Liangshan has been inhabited by quite a few ethnic groups and served as a major passageway for the ancient "Southern Silk Road." Based on archaeological and document records, humans have been living in this place since the

Stone Age, and ever since the Han Dynasty set up the Yuexi Prefecture (111 B.C.) here, central governments of all dynasties have appointed officials to govern this region. Therefore, Liangshan has evolved into a major political, economic, and cultural center in southwest China.

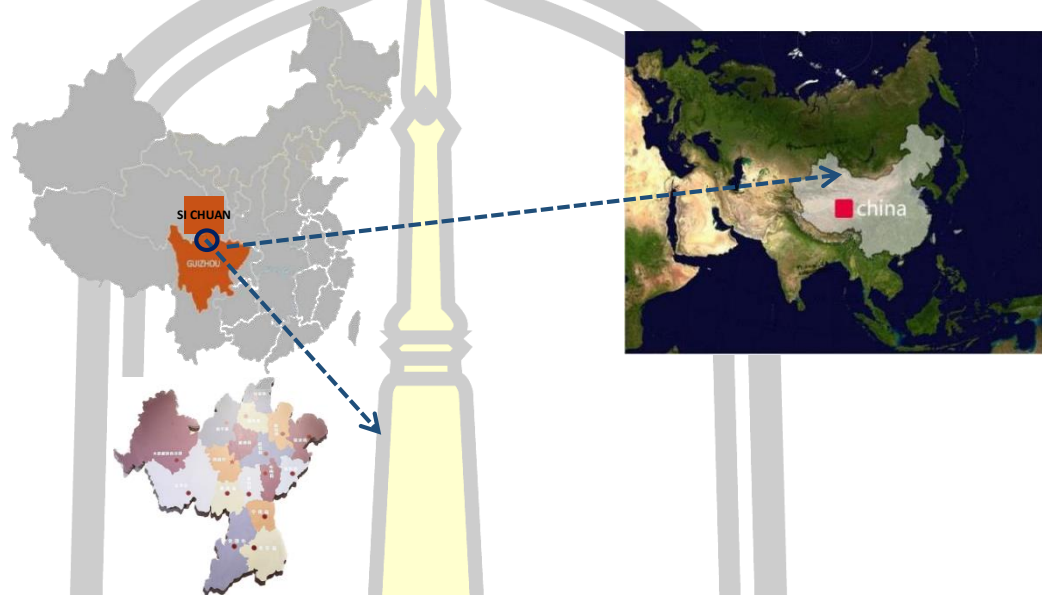


Figure 2 The map of China, in which the orange area is Sichuan Province, shows that Liangshan Prefecture is located in the southwestern part of Sichuan Province, China. The complex geographical environment has made the economic development of the Liangshan region slow, and the Liangshan Yi culture is well preserved.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Ding Xuerui , Accessed 2022

1.2 Climatic Characteristics

In addition to geography, climatic conditions can also play an important role in the formation of cultural forms. The climate of the Liangshan region is a dry subtropical monsoon climate with a clear distinction between dry and wet, with sufficient sunshine in the winter half of the year and little rain and dry warmth. In summer, there are more clouds and rain, and the climate is cooler. Specifically, the climate is "no summer in high places and no winter in low places."² This phenomenon is mainly due to the large difference in altitude, which affects the change in temperature. The dry season is from November to April, with short sunshine hours, little rainfall, and dry air, while the rainy season is from May to October, with long sunshine hours, abundant rainfall, and relatively moist air. The dominant factors that

² The proverb in the Liangshan region, specifically, means that "there is no summer at higher altitudes, the climate is cool, and there is no winter at lower altitudes, the climate is warm."

constitute the complex climate of Liangshan are the combined constraints of solar radiation, atmospheric circulation, and geographical factors. This is due to the onset of the rainy season in mid-June when the monsoon season, brought by the southern monsoon, brings abundant water vapor from the ocean, causing massive and prolonged rainfall. As the monsoon season ends in mid-October, westerly winds from North Africa and Central Asia bring dry and hot air currents, resulting in less rainfall, cracked dry land, and dry and dehydrated air. This ushers in a long early season.

The complex topography of Liangshan Mountain and the complex diversity of atmospheric circulation have changed the three-dimensional climate characteristics and changed the basic pattern of Liangshan Mountain climate to different degrees, resulting in the complexity and diversity of Liangshan Mountain climate. In the area of 360 km wide from east to west and 370 km long from north to south, the climate varies not only from north to south and east to west but also vertically and seasonally, presenting a complex and diverse climate scene of "four seasons in one mountain and different days in ten miles."³ This statement indicates that the vertical climate zone is also a significant geographical feature of the Liangshan region. The formation of vertical climate zones is caused by the undulating terrain, with the An Ning River Valley as the center, and the transition from the middle and southern areas to the higher northwest and northeast areas, which is the direct cause of the vertical climate zones. The saying "a mountain has four seasons and ten miles have different skies" not only describes the characteristics of the vertical climate zone but also reflects the life experience and enlightenment that the ancestors of the Liangshan Yi people gained from nature. It expresses the concept of the unity of nature and man.

This special geographical environment and climatic characteristics make Liangshan Prefecture the most suitable area for the development of green special agriculture, which is ideal for farming as it is an advantageous area for Chinese agricultural products. However, the severe cold climate in the high mountains, the inconvenient transportation, and the mixed farming and agricultural production methods have led to a special dressing style for the Yi people in the Liangshan region. Most of the Yi women in Liangshan wear a knee-length or floor-length skirt in their daily lives, which is not only thick and warm but also easy to walk in. They often wear a collar plate around their necks to prevent the invasion of cold air, while men wear long pants to facilitate their work in the mountains. There is no clear boundary between the four seasons in Liangshan Prefecture, so both men and women, young

³ The proverb of the Liangshan region, specifically explained, means that there are great climatic differences within a small area of the Liangshan region.

and old, wear a kind of cape or shawl called "Chaerwa"⁴ all year round, which is made of pure wool and is worn by all hands to protect them from the wind and rain and keep them warm. The unique geographic and climatic characteristics of the Yi people have created a special dress code that allows outside groups to identify the Yi group through the "Chaerwa" dress code, which has become a unique national identity for the Yi people.



Figure 3 The complexity and diversity of the climate in Liangshan has led to the formation of a special costume for the Yi people in the region, the "Chaerwa," which not only protects them from the wind and rain and keeps them warm but has also become a symbol of their national identity. The Figure shows the Yi women wearing the "Chaerwa."

Source: <https://bbs.scol.com.cn> (January , 2023)

With this complex geographical environment, frequent natural disasters, and backward production methods, the regional economy has been slow to develop, making Liangshan Prefecture one of the deepest poverty areas in China. Because of poverty, the people of the world have been concerned about Liangshan Prefecture over the years, and it has become the location of General Secretary Xi Jinping's greatest concern. Before the Chinese New Year in 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping visited Liangshan Prefecture and gave a series of important instructions as well as

⁴ "Chaerwa" is a traditional costume of the Yi people, popular in Sichuan and Yunnan, made of wool. It has good heat preservation and waterproof effects and is worn during the day and used as a quilt at night. It is one of the most popular costumes of the Yi people and is also one of the most prominent national identity costumes of the Yi people.

implemented a series of assisting policies to assist Liangshan Prefecture in winning the battle against poverty, placing high hopes on the prefecture. But it is also because of the natural barrier formed under such special natural geographical conditions, the self-integrated social system, and the relatively slow economic development that the ancient traditional culture of the Yi people has been preserved intact in the Liangshan region, which also provides good conditions for us to study Yi culture.

Part 2: The Human Environment of Yi People at the Liangshan

2.1 Historical origin of the Liangshan Yi people

Based on gene map analyses and folk historical records of the Liangshan Yi people, the early Yi ancestors came from the Hengduan Mountain Ranges, places called "Shield of Qiong" or "Beginning of Waters" (the source of a river was called "The North" in folk words). The following Yi ancestors, according to the ancient Yi-language epic *Le'e Teyi*, came from Zhaotong and Weining regions in northeastern Yunnan and northwest Guizhou provinces, places called "Zizipuwu" in Yi.

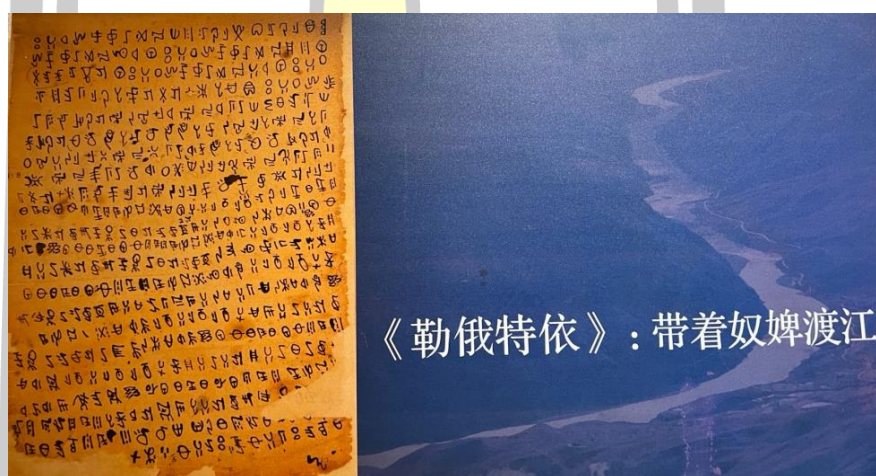


Figure 4 The ancient Yi book "Le'otei," which means "book of legends and history," records Yi-related history and myths and legends and is an important reference for the study of the development of Yi costumes.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

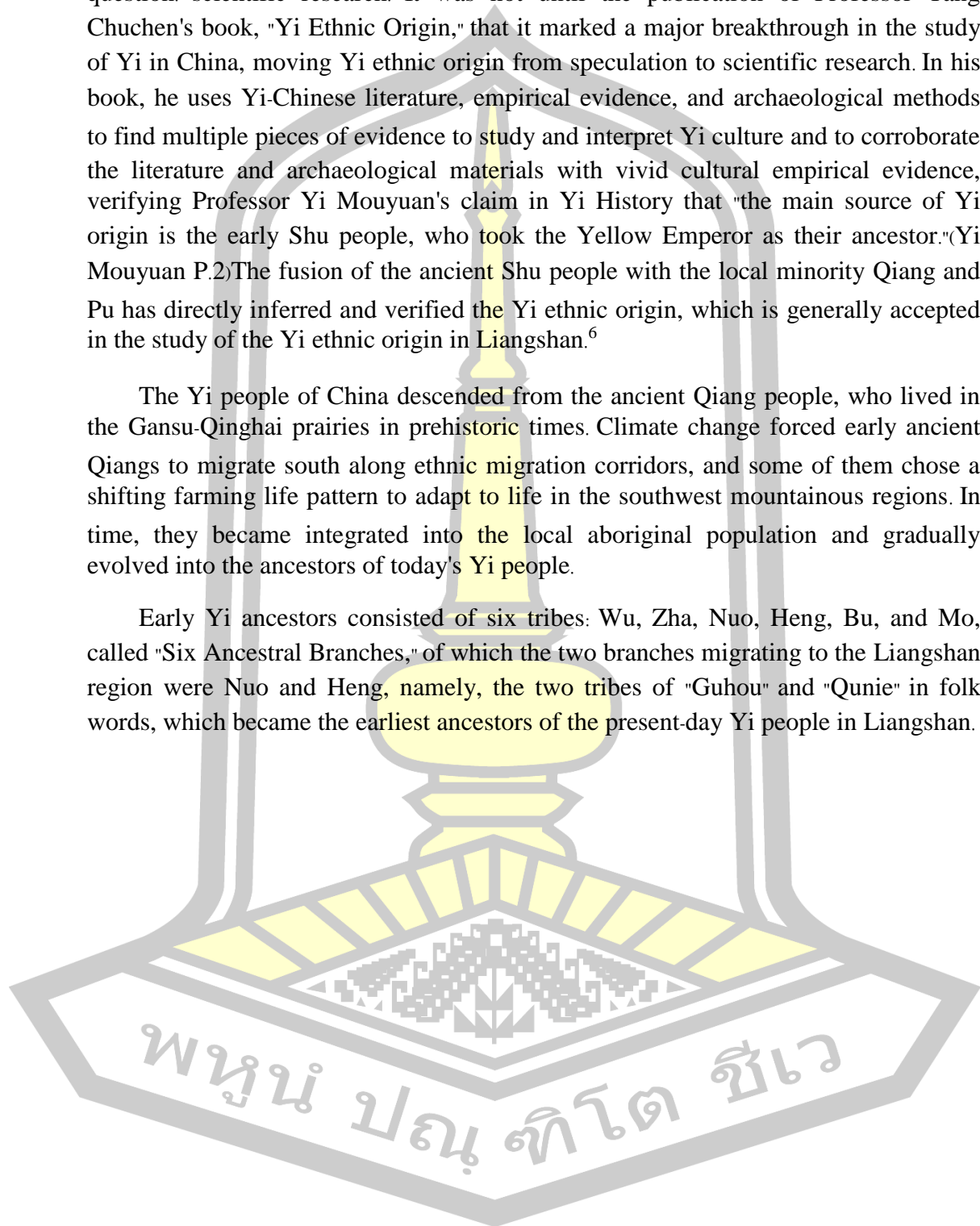
There are many different opinions and statements about the ethnic origin of the Yi people in academic circles, among which several kinds of statements are the most representative: "the Di and Qiang, Yunnan indigenous, northern, western, southern, and eastern, etc."⁵ However, most of the conclusions are only point by point, and few

⁵ This view is widely accepted in the study of the origin of the Yi ethnic group in Liangshan. The name "Di-Qiang" refers to the combination of the ancient Chinese ethnic groups of the Di and Qiang, which are now mainly found in northwest China.

articles have been devoted to this topic, much less a monograph to answer this question. scientific research. It was not until the publication of Professor Tang Chuchen's book, "Yi Ethnic Origin," that it marked a major breakthrough in the study of Yi in China, moving Yi ethnic origin from speculation to scientific research. In his book, he uses Yi-Chinese literature, empirical evidence, and archaeological methods to find multiple pieces of evidence to study and interpret Yi culture and to corroborate the literature and archaeological materials with vivid cultural empirical evidence, verifying Professor Yi Mouyuan's claim in Yi History that "the main source of Yi origin is the early Shu people, who took the Yellow Emperor as their ancestor."(Yi Mouyuan P.2)The fusion of the ancient Shu people with the local minority Qiang and Pu has directly inferred and verified the Yi ethnic origin, which is generally accepted in the study of the Yi ethnic origin in Liangshan.⁶

The Yi people of China descended from the ancient Qiang people, who lived in the Gansu-Qinghai prairies in prehistoric times. Climate change forced early ancient Qiangs to migrate south along ethnic migration corridors, and some of them chose a shifting farming life pattern to adapt to life in the southwest mountainous regions. In time, they became integrated into the local aboriginal population and gradually evolved into the ancestors of today's Yi people.

Early Yi ancestors consisted of six tribes: Wu, Zha, Nuo, Heng, Bu, and Mo, called "Six Ancestral Branches," of which the two branches migrating to the Liangshan region were Nuo and Heng, namely, the two tribes of "Guhou" and "Qunie" in folk words, which became the earliest ancestors of the present-day Yi people in Liangshan.



⁶ The Yi ethnic group descended from the Qiang and the Pu. Pu is widely distributed in southwest China. The Yi ethnic group is based on the fusion of the foreign Qiang and the indigenous Pu, and Pu is one of the sources of the Yi ethnic group.



Figure 5 A diagram and cultural route of the soul-sending route of the Liangshan Yi people, with the red line showing the route of sending souls. In Yi folklore, Yi shamans would perform rituals for the dead based on their own ancestors, and many of these rituals pointed to the north, confirming the "Di-Qiang" theory of Yi ethnic origin. This reflects the diversity in the ritual traditions of the Yi people. It has to do with clothing that indicates the status and roles of different groups of people.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.2 Division of the three major dialect areas in Liangshan Prefecture

Over the centuries, war and natural disasters have caused the Yi to migrate and move around, gradually forming a "large scattering and small gathering." This long period of dispersion and isolation has led to linguistic differences among the Yi people, and due to differences in the natural environment and uneven economic development of each region, six major dialect regions of the Yi people have emerged. The Liangshan Yi are the "Nuosu"⁷ branch of the Yi people, which is one of the most populous branches of the Yi people. They belong to the northern dialect of Yi, and on the basis of the northern dialect, they are divided into three major dialect areas, namely the Yinuo dialect area, the Shengzha dialect area, and the Suodi dialect area. The geographical division of dialect areas is closely related to the scope of migration and settlement of different branches of the Yi people in history. According to the genealogy and ancient records of the Yi tribe in Liangshan, the two tribes, Quenie and Guhou, migrated all the way to Meigu and then split up from east to west, with Guhou

⁷ Yi is transliterated as Nuosu, where "Nu" means "black" or "subject" and "Su" means "people." The Nuosu are the most numerous of these tribes, mainly located in the large and small Liangshan Mountains of Sichuan and some of the Yi areas of Yunnan.

going east and Quenie going west, settling in different directions. To this day, the distribution of family branches in the Liangshan area can be vaguely distinguished: Meigu, Leibo, and Ganluo under the jurisdiction of the Yinuo dialect area are mostly descendants of the Guhou family; Xide, Yuexi, and Zhaojue under the jurisdiction of the Shengzha dialect area are mostly descendants of the Qunnie family; and Butuo, Puge, and Huili under the jurisdiction of the Yinuo dialect area belong to the family branches of other tribes.

Although they are all located in the Liangshan region, each family branch occupies a different geographical area. Because of the high mountains and dangerous waters in the Liangshan region, the mountains and rivers are so difficult to access that each area forms a relatively independent geographical unit, and the production methods, living habits, and behaviors of the Yi people in each unit are self-contained, which greatly influences the formation of their conceptions and thinking patterns. Over time, the three sub-dialectal areas have gradually diverged to form three smaller branches of the Liangshan Yi people, each with its own distinctive characteristics and largely identical culture. If we compare the Liangshan Yi people to a mother, the three subdialects are her three children, who look alike but have different personalities.

With this special dialect division, a unique Yi costume culture has emerged. The distinctive styles of costumes in the three dialect areas are so distinct that people can often tell which area you are from by the Yi costume you are wearing, and the Yi costume style is colorful. In addition, "small gatherings" of people in the same area wear local Yi costumes during major festivals, so that traditional Yi costumes are preserved and the differences in costumes between the three dialect areas have been formed. This special use of Yi costumes has created a unique ethnic identity for the Yi people.

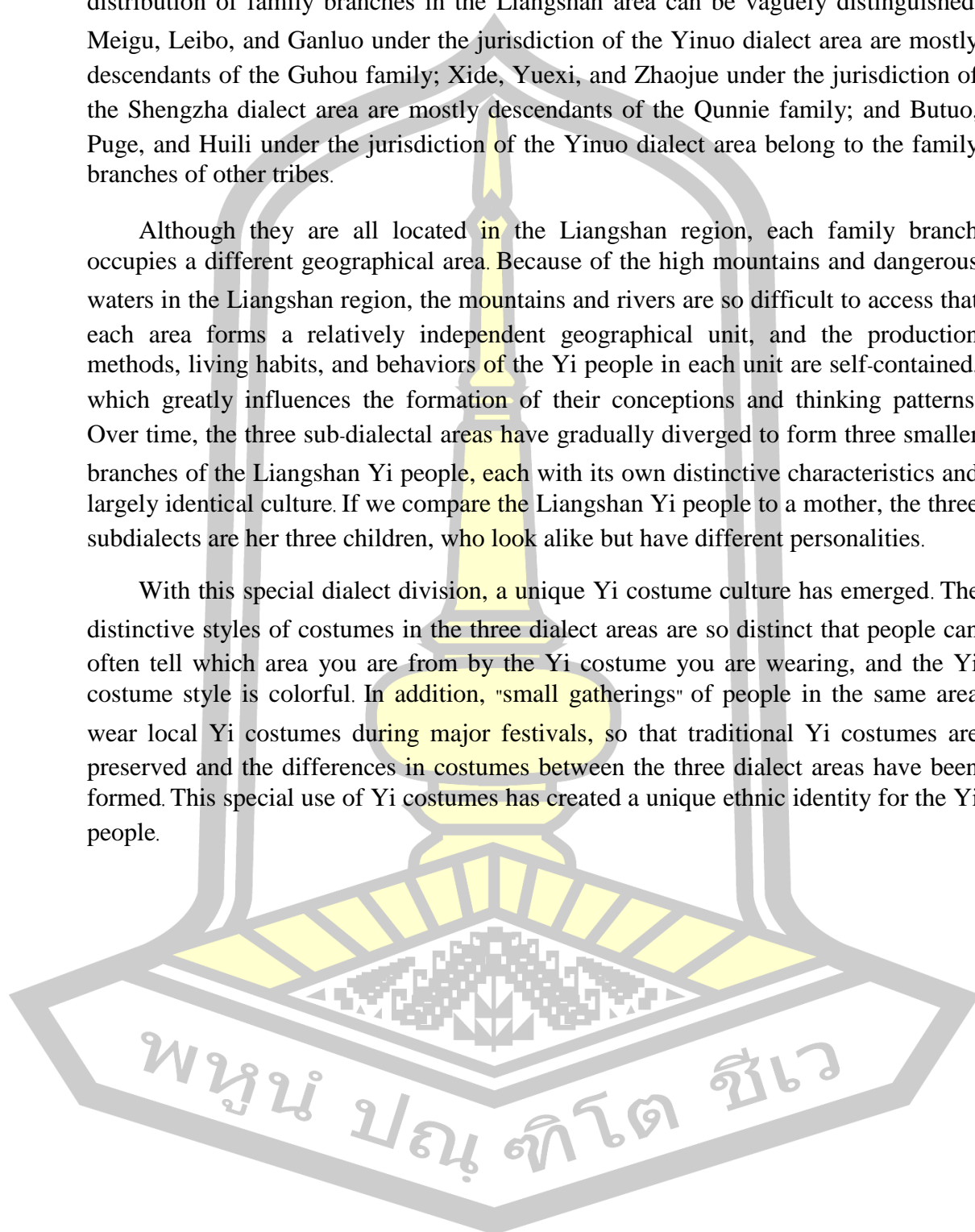




Figure 6 The costumes of the Yi people in Liangshan have their own characteristics depending on the region, dialect, and ecology and can be divided into three major dialect areas. The Figure shows the distribution of the costumes of the three major dialects in Liangshan, with the green part being the Shengzha dialect, the blue part being the Yinuo dialect, and the yellow part being the Shodong dialect. The white part in the middle is Xichang, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, which brings together the costumes of the three dialect areas. Therefore, the Yi people can determine the area of outsiders by the costumes they wear, which is a reflection of their national identity.

Source: Chengdu Map Press compiled and distributed this map. Accessed 2022

2.3 Cultural characteristics of the Liangshan Yi people

According to American culturalists Kroeber and Clarkon's 1952 book, "Culture: A Critical Examination of Concepts and Definitions," published by American culturalists Kroeber and Clarkon in 1952, there are more than 160 definitions of culture by scholars around the world. One of the most commonly accepted interpretations is that "culture is every object, habit, idea, institution, mode of thought, and behavior produced or created by man and subsequently transmitted to others, especially to the next generation."

2.3.1 Religious Beliefs of the Yi People

The Yi people believe in fate, believe that everything has a spirit, worship their ancestors, and fear their souls, which are common beliefs and forms of spiritual worship among all Yi people. In terms of the objects of worship, there are roughly two

types: nature worship and soul worship, which are mainly highlighted in the Bimo⁸ and Suni⁹ cultures.

2.3.1.1 Nature and Worship

In ancient times, when productivity was low and people were unable to control the power of nature, they began to worship nature, which generated great power, through rituals and prayers in an attempt to obtain nature's gifts. After the Yi people entered clan society, as their ability to conquer nature increased, their vision returned from nature to society itself, so they began to explore the origin of their clan to enhance their sense of identity and cohesion, and thus totem worship was born, and the totem worship of the Liangshan Yi people is reflected in all aspects of life. Eagle worship: The eagle is regarded by the Yi people as the embodiment of their ancestors, and men compete for the grace and charm of the eagle. In the "Guidance Sutra" sent by the Bimo to the soul, all the instruments for drug processing are inseparable from the eagle: "The medicine hammer is made of eagle bones; the medicine sieve is made of eagle wings; the medicine spoon is made of eagle tail bones; and the bones of the eagle are made into medicine jars." The use of various eagle parts to make materials for processing medicine apparatus is not really a way to increase the healing effect, but rather a Yi people belief and worship of the eagle.¹⁰ The Yi people love to drink, and the cups they use are the most noble with eagle claws, which can show their strong power, noble, and prominent status, as well as the symbolic meaning of exorcising evil spirits and protecting the safety of family members and clansmen. It is the highest etiquette for the Yi people to use eagle foot cups to drink wine when entertaining guests. This is a psychological manifestation of the Yi people's worship of the eagle totem.

Dragon and tiger worship: The tiger is seen as a symbol of might, with tiger heads painted on Bimo's magic weapons and scriptures and tiger-headed hats worn by Yi children to keep out the wind and avoid the cold and to look powerful and masculine, as well as to ward off evil spirits and avoid disasters and to be safe and healthy. The ancestor of the Yi people, "Zhi Ge A Long,"¹¹ is said to have been born in

⁸The word "bimo" is the translation of Yi language; "bi" means "reciting scriptures," and "mo" means "knowledgeable elder." Bimo is a kind of Yi folk priest who specializes in prayer and sacrifice, and all Bimo are male.

⁹The name "Suni" is the translation of "Yi," which is the title of Yi folk clergy and is equivalent to "sorcerer."

¹⁰The "Wayfinding Sutra" is an ancient text that the Yi people read during ceremonies for the dead to help their souls find their way to the north.

¹¹"Zhi Ge A Long" is a mythological hero of the Yi people and is the most revered ancestor of all the Yi people.

the year of the dragon, in the month of the dragon, on the day of the dragon, and is a symbol of wisdom and good fortune with extraordinary skills.

Fire worship: In the Yi people's view, people are made of fire; they are accompanied by fire all their lives; they see the light in the fire pond when they are born; and they still return to the fire after they die. The fire pond in the Yi family cannot be extinguished, and it represents eternal life and light. The Yi people's proverb says, "You are born by the fire, and you die by the fire." To the Yi people, fire is an ancient nature spirit with an unexplained mystery. Fire is the spirit of the ancestors' souls and holds a mysterious prophecy. We can see the fire totem pattern in many Yi costumes, representing the Yi people's worship of fire.

2.3.1.2 Soul Worship

The Yi people believe that the soul still exists after death, and as a spiritual entity, it lives on and remains inextricably linked to the living. In the Liangshan region, after the death of a loved one, the Yi people ask Bimo to recite sutras, perform a transcendence, and then send them away after the soul-sending ceremony and make a spirit tablet to be enshrined in their homes.

2.3.1.3 Bimo and Suni Culture

In traditional society, the Liangshan Yi nationality's religious beliefs belong to the category of primitive religion. The hosts of religious activities are Bimo and Suni.

According to the historical materials in Yi, the earliest Bimo includes Shizi Shide, Nuling, Shishen, Ge E, Moumu, Qiongbu, and Adu Erpu. They were not only the priests but also the heads of the tribe. Bimo have a wide range of knowledge, know scriptures in Yi and how to offer religious rites, and have a good command of the Yi nationality's traditional knowledge, books, and records in Yi. So they are spreaders of the Yi nationality's ancient culture. They usually use a magical bell, deity fan, magical bamboo slips, and deity sticks to call back the sprite of the dead, rest the soul in peace, expiate the sins of the dead, revere the gods, open a way for the dead, drive out the demons and diseases, exorcise evil spirits, select an auspicious day for a

marriage and funeral, do fortune telling, and perform some other activities. He also divines good or bad luck for a marriage by fighting against enemies, eliminating diseases, hunting, going on a trip, and so on, and fairly hosts the judgments of disputes caused by belongings, quarrelling, larceny, etc.

Bimo culture is created and handed down by the Bimo themselves; scriptures and religious rites are its carriers, and the conviction of ghosts and sacrificial offerings of witchcraft are its core. The culture also has a lot of different cultural systems that

show the Yi people's social history, philosophical ideas, educational ethics, astronomical calendar, literary arts, traditional ceremonies, medicine sanitation, and so on.

The Bimo is generally knowledgeable, mastering traditional Yi texts and codices, and is highly respected as the wise man of Yi folklore. When performing puja, they wear specific veils, which are a symbol of "magic power." The vestments are mostly green and black, generally plain and without ornamentation, and are dignified and generous. Bimo vestments are handed down from generation to generation and cannot be worn casually by the general public, not even to touch, but usually there is a special place to worship, and only when Bimo does puja will they be worn. Bimo vestments for a special cloak, with hats and other matching sets, are available in wool, silk, cotton, and linen; there are two colors, yellow and red. Yellow is worn for funeral rituals and red for weddings and celebrations, and a horsetail cloak is usually worn for ancestor worship; it is woven from the tails of 40 horses and is black and shiny, making it a fine item of Yi costume.

Bimo culture is the core of Yi traditional culture, which is based on the worldview and understanding of Yi ancestors and developed from the Yi people's multiple worships and beliefs about things. Bimo is a sacred, special profession among the Yi people, and the vestments they wear have a special identification symbol that has become a symbol of the Yi people's national identity.

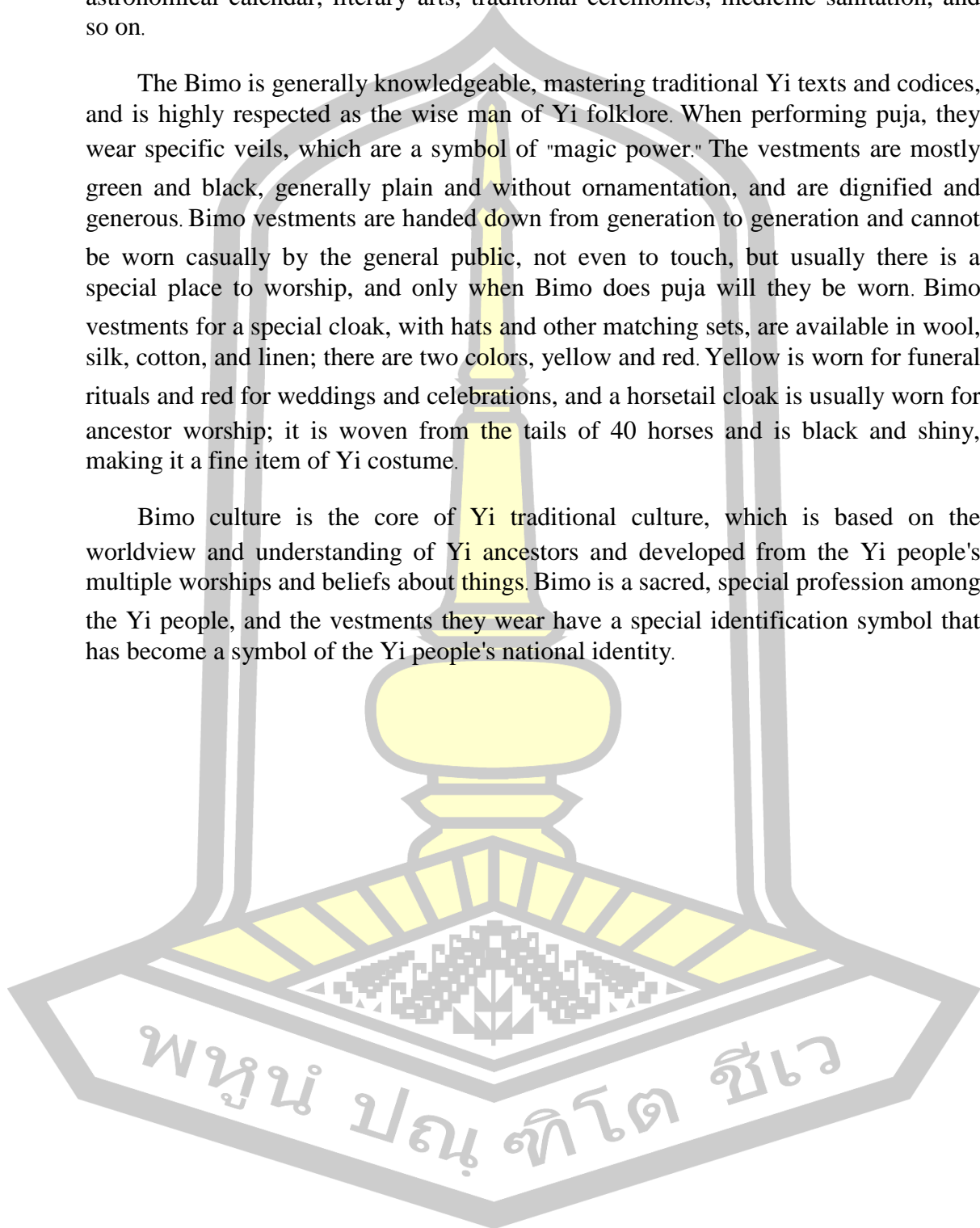




Figure 7 Bimo is wearing "Cha erwa" for the blessing ceremony. The costume of Bimo is specific and inherited, and only Bimo can wear it. Therefore, we can see the professional characteristics of Yi's costume in the dress of Bimo, which is a symbol of Yi's special professional identity.

Source: <http://news.sohu.com> (January , 2023)

In Yi folklore, there is another kind of professional called "Suni." Suni is the title of a type of Yi folk clergy. In Yi folk production activities, they play the role of messengers between human beings and ghosts and gods and can perform stunts such as fishing for things in boiling water, swallowing coals by mouth, and burning their bodies with torches. Male shamans are called "Suni," and female shamans are called "Moni."

The costume of the Suni is relatively simple; the material is generally linen and cotton, and the style is generally the same as the common dress of the people in the area. Both Suni and Moni generally wear their hair in many small locks so that they can dance with their bodies during their practices to increase their ability to communicate with the gods. The sheepskin drum is an important magic tool for the Sunis to use in their practices. In addition, the wild boar's tusk is one of the most popular spiritual objects worn by the Moni.

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Figure 8 Yi Suni performing a ritual: " The purpose is to communicate with the spirits through clothing." The clothing of the Suni is relatively simpler than that of the Bimo, and the material is generally made of cotton and linen. The specific style makes Yi religious costumes iconic and symbolic.

Source: <https://news.qq.com> (January , 2023)

The religious costumes of the Liangshan Yi are carriers of their primitive religion. For example, the eagle claws worn by the Bimo directly reflect the totem worship of the Liangshan Yi with the tiger and eagle as totems, and the ponytail cloak worn by the Bimo during ancestor worship is also extremely consistent with the primitive religion of the Liangshan Yi with nature worship and ancestor worship as its content. As physical symbols of religious beliefs, the costumes of Bimo and Suni can reflect the original beliefs and culture of the Yi people in a concentrated and comprehensive manner, and reflect the aesthetic sense of the Yi people. It can be said that the religious costumes of the Yi people in Liangshan reflect their historical origins, traditional craftsmanship, aesthetic interests, and religious beliefs, and are the richest part of Yi costume culture.

Bimo and Suni wear specific costumes, and outsiders can tell they are Yi shamans by the costumes they wear; such costumes have a certain inheritance, and outsiders cannot touch or wear them. They are only worn by Yi shamans during rituals, and this special Yi religious costume has iconic and symbolic characteristics and the function of determining the special identity roles of Yi people.

2.3.2 The writing of the Yi people

Yi people have developed a language system of their own. According to statistics, the ancient Yi language used in different places contains about 10,000 writing characters, which have characteristics of the six character-formation categories of pictograph, associative compound, self-explanation, ideograph, phonetic loan, and orthography. There were no accurate historical records of the time when the Yi people began to create their writing characters. Based on the characteristics of its writing forms and the lack of evidence of influences from Han Chinese and other peoples' writing characters, it is believed that Yi People's writing characters had been in common use long before Han Chinese characters from Central China were introduced into Southwest China. Hence a more credible theory of Yi People creating its own writing characters at the time of Han Dynasty. Ancient Yi language in Liangshan contains over 8,000 characters, out of which the State Council of PRC selected 819 characters as the unified national standard Yi writing characters in 1982.



Figure 9 The Yi book "Aju Simuni," which records Yi writing and the historical development of the Yi people, is an important reference for understanding the Yi people's use of Yi dress.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.3.3 The Unique Yi Calendar

Yi People's ancient astronomical calendar remained an excellent representative of its splendid ancient culture. From motions of the sun, the moon and the stars, and changes of their relative locations, Yi forefathers managed to observe and know well the general law of heavenly bodies' motions, which was a great achievement from their long time of production and life practices. And the invention of a "Deca-month Calendar" shocked the world even further. Up till today, the majority of Yi people in Liangshan still keep their custom of traditional calendar uses. Yi People numbered the

day, the month and the year with rotations of the twelve representative animals of the twelve Earthly Branches. They treated a round of 12 days as a week, three rounds of 36 days as a month, ten months of 360 days as a year, and the rest of 5 days as the New Year celebration holiday. In every Yi year, the Yi people wear costumes to the event, which becomes a festive venue for the display of the Yi people's national identity.

2.3.4 Yi Myths and Legends

Many myths also relate to the origin and historical development of Yi culture, such as the formation and development of clans, the invention of production tools, the evolution of the marriage system, and the formation of marriage customs, and it can be said that myths are the historical talks of Yi ancestors about the universe, everything, society, nature, and other phenomena. These stories reflect some of the background of the Yi people in primitive and early slave societies. It is an important reference value for the study of the historical background of Yi costume.

2.3.5 Yi Traditional Festival - Torch Festival

Each year on the 24th day of the sixth lunar month, Yi people celebrate their grandest festival—the Torch Festival. There is a legend regarding the origin of the Torch Festival. In ancient times, people on the earth were obliged to pay annual taxes to the emperor in heaven. Shize Arbi, a wrestler with prodigious strength given by heaven, was sent to collect the taxes. He had heard that on the earth there was a man with unusual strength named Heiti Laba. Shize wanted to challenge him. One day, he found Heiti Laba's home, but only his mother was in. On seeing the guest, the mother extended her hospitality by giving him a lump of iron to eat, which was Heiti Laba's main diet. Upon eating it, Shize's teeth were knocked out. Thus, Shize knew he was no match for Heiti Laba, and fled away. As soon as Heiti Laba returned and heard about it, he quickly chased after Shize, who was brought to bay at last, and had to hide himself in the hollow of a dead tree beside the road. Heiti Laba pursued him right up to the hollow tree, but Shize was nowhere in sight. Furiously angry, he took the dead tree in his hands and tossed it up and down. As a result, Shize was squeezed to death in the tree hole. When he heard about this, the emperor in heaven flew into a fury and released locusts and moths to destroy the people's crops as a punishment. Thereupon, the people on earth figured out a way to burn up the pests with torches. Since then, it was agreed together with the emperor-in heaven, that the people on earth should burn pests with torches every year. As time passed the custom developed into the Torch

Festival, The Torch Festival is called "Duzhe" in the Yi language. In the Yi language, "Du" refers to fire, while "Zhe" means to "reply, On the day of the Torch

Festival, people gather in a designated place to hold competitions, such as: a beauty contest, wrestling, bullfighting, and sheep fighting. As night approaches, people of all ages in various villages light their torches and walk down the mountain slopes to the fields. On their way, with flaming torches in their hands, they sing "Zhe Zhe Zimo..." (i.e. Yi people of the highest social rank repay with bulls, the rich with sheep, and the poor with chickens.) On arrival at the fields, they sing, "burn away locusts, burn away hunger, and burn away poverty." After that, they gather together in one place. Shining in the bright light, they sing and dance to their hearts' content. The Torch Festival is not only a traditional festival for Yi people to offer sacrifices and pray for blessing, but is also a grand event demonstrating their colorful ethnic culture. It is also called an

"Oriental Carnival". In 2006, the Yi Torch Festival was included in the first batch of China's national intangible cultural heritage list.

With the modernization and opening up of Liangshan, today's Yi Torch Festival is not only the inheritance of ancient festivals and folk customs but also a living atmosphere that has kept pace with the times. One of the most popular and unique programs is the Yi traditional beauty pageant. The Yi traditional beauty pageant is a unique combination of folk customs and costumes and is loved by everyone for its unique presentation and style. In 1989, the first Liangshan Yi beauty pageant was held in Liangshan Prefecture, and the Yi beauty pageant was thus put on the official stage. Among the criteria for the Yi beauty pageant are delicate features, a tall body, and thick black braids for women. The criteria for men are to be handsome, sunny, as well as to be good at singing and dancing. In addition to physical features, the contestant's speech, behavior, demeanor, knowledge, and moral quality are all important, and both wisdom and beauty are required to become the "most beautiful" standard in the hearts of the Yi people. At the same time, the beauty pageant also has high requirements for the dresses of the contestants. The dresses of the men in the Liangshan Yi beauty pageant require gravity and generosity, while the dresses of the women require simplicity and elegance. In every beauty pageant, a batch of new Yi costumes that have never been seen before will appear in front of people's eyes, and the set of costumes that won the best costume award that year will become a popular costume trend.

The Yi traditional torch festival is a comprehensive embodiment of Yi beliefs and rituals, including songs and dances, literature and arts, games and sports, costumes and rituals, food and drink customs, etc. The most important traditional festival of the Yi people has the richest and most extensive historical and cultural content. The costumes worn by the Yi people in beauty pageants are a manifestation

of their national identity. By presenting their own culture on an international stage, the Yi costume culture spreads to a higher international stage, allowing multiple groups to see the Yi culture, which becomes a self-expression of the Yi people to the outside world.



Figure 10 The annual Torch Festival event, where Yi men and women in full dress participate in a beauty contest, attracts many visitors from home and abroad, who build their national identity through their costumes and help more people understand Yi costume culture.

Source: The event of the Liangshan Yi Traditional Beauty Pageant in Xichang, China, photo: Ding Xuerui, 2022

2.3.6 Yi Wool Weaving Technique

The Yi wool weaving technique is a special kind of weaving craft and is the main craft of Yi clothing production. The Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture live mainly in the mountainous areas at an altitude of about 2,500 meters, where sheep are abundantly produced, and during their long production life they have developed special dresses called "Chaerwa" and "Jiashi," both of which are made mainly of wool and sheepskin. Jiashi is an indispensable costume for Yi men, women, and children, and is mainly made of wool with black, white, and blue colors. The tools used to weave the surplice include bamboo mats, slingshots, plywood, bamboo curtains, etc. "The weaving process is rather complicated." There are two types of jiashi: single-layer and double-layer. Single-layer jiashi is easy to wear and is used during labor. The double-layer Jiashi e is worn as a dress at the event and is available in white, black, blue, gray, and so on. In general, white, gray, and black surplices are worn by middle-aged and elderly Yi men and women, while blue or cyan are worn by young men and women.

"Chaerwa" is another representative garment of the Yi people, whose production process consists of cutting wool, twisting, playing wool, twisting, weaving wool cloth, and sewing. After the woolen cloth is woven, it is cut with scissors according to the set length, and then the single woolen cloth is sewn together to form the prototype of "Chaerwa." Afterwards, the threads left behind during weaving are rolled together, and the collar is sewn together so that a complete chalwa is made. In addition to the original color, the Yi people often use vegetable dyes to dye the "charwa" blue or green according to their favorite colors. The Yi "Chaerwa" is heavy, heat-preserving, durable, and can protect from the sun in summer and keep warm in winter, making it an essential item of clothing for the Yi people all year round, showing the characteristics that distinguish it from other ethnic minority clothing, which is iconic.

The Jia Shi and Chaerwa are the important costumes of the Yi people. In addition to the practical function of the costume itself, it also symbolizes the significance of the Yi people's emblem and culture. It is closely related to the origin and long history of the Yi people and has always influenced the evolution and development of Yi costumes over the centuries.



Figure 11 old women are making "Chaerwa," which is a necessary costume for the Yi people all year round. In addition to the practical function of the costumes themselves, the "Chaerwa" also has a certain significance in terms of ethnic emblem and cultural significance, and the Chaerwa woven in this traditional way is the most authentic, which is of great value in demonstrating the construction of Yi identity to the outside world.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo: Ding Xuerui , 2022

Part 3: The Development of the Liangshan Yi in two Social Contexts

3.1 Liangshan before the founding of New China

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China (1912-1949) Karl Heinrich Marx put forward five forms of social development: primitive society, slave society, feudal society, capitalist society and socialist society. Before 1949, there still was a primitive society and a slave society among the ethnic minorities in China, which did not exist in most countries of the world at that time.

At the early stage of the establishment of New China, the vast Yi area in Liangshan was still in the historical stage of a slave society. The level of social productivity was low, the backward slave system and the feudal tusi system, with strict hierarchy, family branches and constant armed fights. Liangshan has been closed, ignorant and backward for a long time. According to historical records, the slavery society of Yi People had come into being when ancestors of Yi People migrated into Liangshan region about 2000 years ago, and the two branches migrating into Liangshan were Guhou and Qunie tribes. Yi People's folk epic Le'e Teyi says, "Going across the river with slaves and maid servants", Han Chinese history books also kept similar records.

The Yi people went through several stages of historical development, including primitive society, slave society, and feudal society, but the degree of development varied due to factors such as geography and production development, and there were great differences between regions. The difference between the slavery system in the Liangshan region and that in other regions of the world is the strict hierarchical system within the nation. During the Qin and Han dynasties, after the Gu hou and Qu nie tribes occupied Liangshan, they began to establish a hierarchy of family branches,¹² forming a hierarchical hereditary society consisting of a supreme ruling class called

¹² Family branch (Jiazhi, a term from Han Chinese) is called "Ciwei" in Yi language, meaning "descendants of the same ancestors", i.e., the social members of the same paternal group. In Liangshan Yi slavery society, all members of Yi nationality origins have their own family branch organizations, and every branch member ought to bear his or her duties in the organization. Inside the family branch, it is those well recognized headmen who are entitled to manage the internal affairs and coordinate the social relations between family branch members. Generally titled "Degu" or "Suyi" the headman's status cannot be inherited, and it doesn't enjoy social privileges, either. The headman status is acquired naturally when a certain branch member shows peculiar abilities in his dealings of specific social affairs in and outside his family branch.

"Zimo" over hundreds of Black Yi branches and nearly a thousand White Yi branches, as well as conquered slaves.(Yang Jing,2015)

According to records in ancient Yi books, in early Yi slavery society in Liangshan, the social members of Yi nationality were divided into the five hierarchical classes of Zi, Mo, Bi, Ge, and Zhuo based on their powers and occupations. After a long time of historical evolution, the hierarchy of social members again evolved into the five classes of Zimo, Nuohuo, Qunuo, Gajia, and Gaxi by blood relations. Zimo and Nuohuo were the ruling classes, and Qunuo, Gajia and Gaxi belonged to the ruled classes. Blood relations, striking characteristics of Yi slavery society in Liangshan, played a dominant role in that hierarchical system. All groups were hereditary by blood, and were hierarchical in their subordination, exploitation, and marriage systems.



Figure 12 The author drew a hand-drawn map of the Yi hierarchy in Liangshan. During the period of the slave society in Liangshan, people of different status levels wore different Yi costumes. The Yi costumes were worn by people of different status levels, and their social status could be distinguished from the color and pattern of the costumes.

Graphic : Ding Xuerui, 2022

Zimo, the highest rank, accounts for 1% of the total number of people. In Chinese, it means Tusi, who are Yi tribal chiefs who were ordained by feudal dynasties. Hereditary tusi officials were historically the highest ruling class in the entire Liangshan Yi region. Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, Zimo's power has gradually weakened and his supremacy has been seriously threatened by the Nuohe, but even so, his status as a slave master has remained unshaken, and he is still considered the highest nobleman in the traditional thinking of the people.



Figure 13 Zimo and his slaves are shown on the far left and right sides of the Figure, respectively. The cloth used to wrap their heads is also longer, wider, and thicker than that of other Yi people of the same rank, showing their distinguished status and position by the way they dress. This kind of dress, with black as the beauty, is still popular in the Liangshan region today. The photograph was taken before 1950, during the period of slavery in Liangshan.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo :Ding Xuerui , 2022



Nuohe, commonly known as "Black Yi" in Chinese, means "black" in Yi and is a symbol of status and position, accounting for 6.9 percent of the total population. As a noble class, the "Nuohe" have been the main rulers of Liangshan since the Qing Dynasty, possessing a large amount of wealth and power and, to a certain extent, ruling the three classes of Qunuo, A Jia, and Ga Xi, with Zimo being the ruling class.



Figure 14 The women of Nuohe's nobility wore Chaerwa costumes with exquisite designs and gorgeous hues, emphasizing the nobility's particular richness. The photograph was taken before 1950, during the period of slavery in Liangshan. Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

Qunuo is the commoner class. Qu" means "white" and "ordinary" in Yi language, and "Qunuo" is called "people" in Chinese. "People" is also known as "Baiyi".Qunuo accounted for 50% of the total population and was called Baiyi(White Yi) in Han dialect. While belonging to the ruled class, Qunuo retained some personal freedom, personal rights and economic independence. As a result, a minority few of Qunuo could manage to become slave owners via their economic and political power, and some could even far surpass their previous slave masters in wealth and power. Some, however, could be reduced to the classes of Gajia or Gaxi due to economic bankruptcies or other reasons.



Figure 15 The Qunuo and his wife and children, from the costumes and dress to see and Zimo, Nuohu and have a clear status class gap. The photograph was taken before 1950, during the period of slavery in Liangshan.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

Accounting for 33% of the whole population, Gajia was called "Aniia Wazi" (slaves) in Han dialect, which consisted of the married Gaxi population and the reduced class of Qunuo. They had no freedom to migrate and had to reside alongside their masters' castles to be ordered about anytime and bear various forms of exploitation. They had no complete parental rights, either, and their children would be taken in proportion to become their masters' Gaxi slaves. The Gajia class was further graded into Yigen and non-Yigen (Yi posterity and non-Yi posterity) groups; the Yigen group of Gajia could only be owned by Zimo or Nuohuo classes, and the non-Yigen group could be possessed by Qunuo; the Yigen group could accumulate wealth to redeem themselves.

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Figure 16 The Gajia women and his children, wearing costumes made of cotton or linen, wear shorter skirts to facilitate productive work. During the slave period, the Yi people had a clear differentiation of costumes among different social classes. The photograph was taken before 1950, during the period of slavery in Liangshan.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

Gaxi was the most miserable slave class, accounting for 10% of the whole population, which was called "Guozhuang Wazi (slaves)" in Han dialect. A large proportion of Gaxi was those captured or trafficked from other places, and a minority of them comprised the younger unmarried children of Gajia class. Gaxi was also separated into Yigen and non-Yigen groups; both had not the least personal rights and wealth and were sold, transferred or paid for debt totally at the mercy of their masters. When Gaxi came of age, their masters would choose for him or her a mate and wed them according to their blood ties, then assigned them a residence and a plot of arable land, so that they could rise to the status of Gajia by living separately from their masters.

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Figure 17 The Yi Gaxi, who have no personal freedom, no house, field, property, marriage, children's kinship rights, etc., can be bought and sold at any time. It is the lowest class in the slavery hierarchy. The photograph was taken before 1950, during the period of slavery in Liangshan.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

In middle and late years of Ming dynasty, because a feudal land system such as land transaction and tenancy was developed, the advanced farming tools and techniques were adopted, and the crops such as corn and potato suitable for growing in Yi region were introduced, the upper classes of Liangshan Yi society were greatly motivated in a fanatic pursuit of land ownership, which led to fierce fight for land between hereditary Headmen and their subordinate Nuohuo (Black Yi) class; eventually, the hereditary Headmen were defeated and had to retreat from populous regions to remote regions. Thereafter, the power of Nuch family branch began to grow rapidly, and the feudal development of Liangshan Yi society basically came to a halt.

In May 1935, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army marched through Liangshan Yi regions. They exemplarily executed the Communist Party's policy of the equality of all nationalities, and received popular and active support from Yi people. Therefore, the Red Army were able to shake off the pursuit by the Nationalist Party's formidable forces, and performed a series of great historic miracles, such as "tactical crossing of Jinsha River", "Yihai Alliance", ¹³ and "courageous seizure of Luding Chain

¹³ On May 22, 1935, at Yihai Lake, in the company of Nie Rongzhen, Luo Ruiging, and Xiao Hua, comrade Liu Bocheng licked blood and swore to be brothers with Guoji Yueda (Xiao Yedan), the chieftain of the Guoji Family Branch of the Liangshan Yi People. Thereafter, Xiao Yedan sent guides to escort the Red Army smoothly through Yi-populated regions, winning precious time for the Red Army to cross the Dadu River and seize Luding Bridge. "Yihai Alliance" had become a glorious model of the Chinese Communist Party's successful policy of nationality equality and unity.

Bridge". The Politburo of Chinese Communist Party also convened the famous "Huili Meeting" at the Iron Mill of Huili County. The Red Army passed through the Yi regions successfully and achieved the strategic goal of shifting to the northwest of China. Chairman Mao emotionally improvised the following verses, "Jinsha water shoots clouds and cliffs warm, Dadu Bridge crosses the iron chains cold". Many excellent Yi youths joined the Red Army and moved together to the North to fight against Japanese aggressors, and made glorious contributions to Chinese nation's victory over Fascist Japan.

After the Red Army moved to the North, the revolutionary followers they had cultivated in Yi people began to lead people of all nationalities in Liangshan to struggle against the reactionary warlords and the slave-owner class. Many Yi compatriots joined underground Party organizations and fought with people of all nationalities for their liberations.



Figure 18 shows the statue of the "Yihai Alliance" monument, with Liu Bo Cheng on the left and Xiaoyedan on the right, carved in 1986, located in Xichang, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, which is a landmark sculpture of Liangshan Prefecture. The Yi costume worn by Xiaoyedan is a symbol of national identity, an iconic sculpture, and a form of self-expression for an outside group.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo :Ding Xuerui , 2022

The handicraft industry in the slave society of the Liangshan Yi people did not form a profession and only engaged in some handicraft production during the agricultural leisure season. Most of the handicraft techniques are taught in the Han area and are mainly passed down from family to family. Handicraftsmen mainly

include weavers, felt rollers, carpenters, blacksmiths, silversmiths, lacquer painters, bamboo weavers, and so on. The finished handicraft products are mainly used for family consumption, while some are made for others, often in exchange for labor and help. In a few marginal areas, a few handicraft workshops have emerged, and their finished products are beginning to be sold. As a result of their self-sufficient economic life, bartering is the main form of commodity exchange among the Liangshan Yi. In addition to exchanging goods among Yi people, Yi people also exchange goods with other ethnic groups, with Yi-Chinese goods playing an important role in the exchange. The saying "the Yi cannot live without the Han, and the Han cannot live without the Yi; the Yi cannot live without salt, and the Han cannot live without leather" is a true reflection of the commodity exchange between the Yi and the Han at that time.

Liangshan Slaves' hierarchy is like a pyramid, with the lower class never rising to the upper class, while the ruled class may be forced to descend to a lower class. As the Liangshan Yi proverb says, "A master is always a master, a slave is always a slave, and there is no man in the world without a master." This "stratification" of identity is clear in the traditional Yi culture. For example, when Yi people from the present-day Liangshan Yi region meet for the first time, they tell each other about their family branches after they say their names. This helps them learn about each other's lineage and region. This shows that the family branch relationship is not only a hierarchical relationship but also a sense of belonging and identity in the blood of the Liangshan Yi, and we can see this hierarchical difference in the formal beauty of Yi costumes. Noble lineage Yi Zimo and Nuo He never intermarry with other family branches; their costumes are mostly black, in keeping with the nobility's beauty; the cloth used to wrap the head is also longer, wider, and thicker than other grades of Yi; their clothing has more silver ornaments and exquisite workmanship; it is embellished with precious ornaments such as onyx; it has a wide range of patterns and elegant colors, emphasizing the nobility's unique wealth. And, in order to facilitate production and labor, the Qunuo class of women will wear more cotton and linen as the main costume materials, with ornaments made of shells and material beads, and skirts that are relatively short. This special hierarchical division has shaped the way the Yi people use clothing to distinguish their identity and rank.

The combination of the slave-owning regime and the hierarchical family branch system, which lasted for nearly 2,000 years, created a closed pattern of "one wall for the great rivers, two walls for the great mountains, and three walls for the family

branch system." (Yang Xiaomin,2002) However, due to the lack of a corresponding social foundation, the Liangshan region did not directly participate in the socio-historical and cultural changes that China was experiencing, nor in the changes in dress, but educated people from all over the world began to seek change and innovation. Yi students studying in the academy gradually began to accept new knowledge and culture from the West under the influence of the outside press and new media, while the new way of dressing began to quietly influence the far-flung Liangshan region.

3.2 Liangshan after the founding of New China

In modern times, with the development of politics, economy, and culture, the Liangshan Yi society has also been changing, and intellectuals within the Yi society who are influenced by progressive ideas have begun to raise demands for reform and abolition of the slave social system, and there have been some social reform initiatives. However, since it was difficult to touch the fundamental political and economic systems of Yi society, it was difficult to achieve overall social progress through their own social improvements.

In 1950, the liberation of Liangshan finally came, and in October 1952, the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Region was established (later changed to a state). In 1956, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Liangshan began to implement democratic reforms, formally abolishing the slavery system in Liangshan Prefecture, freeing the slaves, developing production, and uniting the nation, which was the most important event in the history of Liangshan and the establishment of the socialist system, marking the The establishment of the socialist system marked the complete destruction of the last well-preserved slave system in China, the withdrawal of the slavery system of the Liangshan Yi people, which had lasted for more than 2,000 years, from the stage of history, and the step of the Liangshan Yi people across the millennium into the new socialism.

In 1956, at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the delegates of the Liangshan Yi people made a speech entitled "Leap from Slave Society to Socialism," which was praised by Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and other leaders of the Central Committee, and the delegates congratulated the Yi people for their great progress across the ages with a long and thunderous applause.



Figure 19 On October 8, 1952, a meeting celebration for the establishment of the People's Government of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Region, the predecessor of Liangshan Prefecture, was held in Zhaoge, then the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, and this is the Yi youth dancing at the celebration meeting. The costumes worn by the young dancers symbolize their Yi identity, which was an important force in entering modern China.

Source: <http://www.news.cn> (January , 2023)

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Yi people's social, economic, cultural, scientific, and technological, educational, medical, and health care undertakings have been greatly developed. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, large-scale land reform and democratic reform were carried out in the Yi region from 1951 to 1957, abolishing the system of exploitation, and the People's Government actively implemented the policy of ethnic equality in the Yi region and vigorously promoted ethnic regional autonomy. From May 1951 to the present, two Yi autonomous prefectures, Liangshan in Sichuan and Chuxiong in Yunnan, and the Honghe Hani and Yi autonomous prefecture in Yunnan, have been established in areas where the Yi people live.

Regional national autonomy is not only a basic policy adopted by the Chinese government to solve ethnic problems but also an important political system in China. The system of regional national autonomy refers to the system of regional autonomy, the establishment of autonomous organs, and the exercise of autonomy in places where various ethnic minorities live together under the unified leadership of the state. The system of national and regional autonomy means that in the unified motherland family, under the unified leadership of the state, the corresponding organs of self-government are established on the basis of the regions where the minority nationalities live, and the organs of self-government are set up to exercise the right to

self-government, to manage the internal affairs of their own nationalities and regions autonomously, and to exercise the right to be the masters of their own house.

According to the principle of regional ethnic autonomy, an ethnic group may establish a separate autonomous locality within the area where it is concentrated or multiple ethnic autonomous localities with different administrative units in other parts of the country according to its distribution. The implementation of regional ethnic autonomy not only guarantees the right of minority people to be the masters of their own country but also maintains the unity of the country. The implementation of regional ethnic autonomy is conducive to combining the state's guidelines and policies with the specific realities of minority areas and to combining the development of the state with the development of minority groups, giving full play to the advantages of each aspect.

The promulgation of the system of regional national autonomy is in line with China's national interests and the fundamental interests of people of all ethnic groups. The implementation of regional ethnic autonomy guarantees the equal status and equal rights of ethnic minorities in politics and greatly satisfies the desire of all ethnic minorities to actively participate in the political life of the country. The establishment of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture is a further practice of the CPC's policy of regional ethnic autonomy in Liangshan, creating the prerequisites and conditions for the comprehensive advancement of various undertakings in Liangshan.

In 1978, since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee made a major decision in the Liangshan region, which was to merge eight counties in the Liangshan region, namely Xichang, Dechang, Huili, Huidong, Ningnan, Mianning, Yanyuan, and Muli, into Liangshan Prefecture and to move the capital of Liangshan Prefecture from Zhaohe to Xichang. After the merger, the social and economic development of Liangshan Prefecture grew by leaps and bounds.

As a result of the reform and opening up of Liangshan, the accelerated urbanization, and the rise of the working wave in Liangshan, many Yi people have moved from the alpine and semi-mountainous areas to the periphery of towns, river valleys, and transportation routes. The changes in ecological environment and lifestyle have led to changes in production methods, aesthetic awareness, and consumption concepts. During this period, the individual economy sprang to life, and individual entrepreneurs and private enterprises flourished in Liangshan, enlivening the urban and rural markets and booming the Liangshan economy.

The variety of commodities traded grew alongside the development of the rural economy and the improvement of peasants' living standards. In order to meet the special needs of ethnic minority people, the state also established an ethnic trade

system to organize ethnic minorities to develop the production and acquisition of local traditional products as well as the production and supply of ethnic special-needs commodities. During this period, the Yi costume trade, too, developed along with the rapid development of the Liangshan economy, the revival of traditional costumes, and the strengthening of communication with the outside world. New costume elements entered the vision of Yi costume makers, while In order to meet the needs of the modern Yi people in terms of beauty and diversification of costumes, many Yi dress makers began to inject new patterns and colors in line with the aesthetic and cultural factors of the Yi people, and these improved Yi dresses were regarded as modern traditional Yi community dresses and were recognized and loved by the public. As economic and cultural exchanges with the outside world increased, large-scale, ready-made costumes flowed into markets at all levels through commodity exchanges. In Liangshan Prefecture, too, the construction of its own street for the operation of ethnic specialty goods has begun, and with the support of relevant government policies, more and more people have begun to engage in the sale and production of Yi costumes.

The implementation of the reform and opening up of the market has become a turning point in China's history, guiding the country's socialism in the right direction of development and progress. China has changed its backward and closed historical situation for more than 40 years, and the face of society has changed dramatically. Under the guidance of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, people broke with old ideas as they began to actively accept the advanced ideas of society and contribute to socialist modernization due to the influence of socialist reforms. At the same time, China's economic system also underwent great changes, with the market economy as the mainstay, economic construction becoming the focus of national development, and China's new socialism beginning to face the world. Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CPC, the ethnic economy of the Liangshan region has been developing rapidly and healthily. In 1999, compared with 1979, the gross domestic product increased from 1.525 billion yuan to 13.441 billion yuan, an increase of 8.81 times, achieving a historic leap.

China's ethnic policies and measures have also entered a new historical period, with increased support for ethnic minorities, deeper cultural understanding, adherence to regional autonomy for ethnic minorities, and accelerated economic development. On April 17, 1987, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission stated in its Report on Some Important Issues Concerning Ethnic Work that "economic construction will be the center, and the political, economic, and cultural development of ethnic minorities will be comprehensively developed." Subsequently, the government issued the following policies, one after another, to ensure the rapid development of the cause of ethnic minorities in all aspects.

"Work Opinions on Strengthening Access to the Local Town for Business and Tourism of the Ethnic Minority Staff in the Border Areas"

"Request for Instructions on Policies Related to Poverty Alleviation in Ethnic Minority Areas"

"Notice on Several Matters Concerning the Further Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional Ethnic Autonomy Laws"

In 1980, with the economic development, the population migration since the reform and opening up has promoted the economic and social exchanges between ethnic groups and expanded the depth and breadth of inter-ethnic exchanges. As inter-ethnic exchanges became more frequent and the market economy advanced, ethnic minorities gradually realized that knowing only their own language not only limited their communication with the outside world, but also prevented them from gaining development opportunities in the market economy. As a result, the Yi people have begun to learn Chinese, and more and more Yi people are able to master the language. In addition, there is the influence of cultural concepts and lifestyles. In their exchanges with Han Chinese, ethnic minorities gradually changed from "not adapting" to accepting new market concepts, knowledge and information, and the sense of market competition and mutual cooperation gradually strengthened. The modern urban lifestyle of comfort, convenience, and fashion has also influenced entertainment, traditional costumes, residential architecture, food structure, and art forms of ethnic minorities.

Since its reform and opening up, China, as the world's largest developing country, has attracted widespread domestic and international attention to its poverty problem. Throughout the 1980s, the issue of poverty in rural China was discussed more frequently, and the reform of China's social and economic system focused on rural areas. These reform efforts continued until the mid-1990s, and most of these policies are still in place today. Although the remote Liangshan region has become a deep poverty area in China because of its special geographical environment, the state has promulgated many policies to help fight poverty and develop ethnic industries, which have helped the Liangshan region get rid of poverty.

Part 4: The Yi People of Liangshan in the context of Modernity

The modernization of the Yi community in Liangshan is closely related to the context of modern China's economic reform and social development. The Chinese government has put in place an important policy for each locality and ethnic group to develop income from their ethnic identity and their cultural identity. Therefore, the above situation, it has become a new and modern context in the Yi community as

well. However, such modernity Therefore, it is systematically related to the presentation of one's dress identity to others in various ways.

The rapid development of science and technology in the 20th century has enabled human beings to achieve global interaction at all levels: economic, political, cultural, and social. While globalization has shattered regional economic boundaries, it has also triggered a conflict and integration of social values and social perceptions. Rather than a purely economic or political global integration, globalization has targeted the cultural values aspect first.(Wang Junren ,2001)

After the disintegration of the bipolar pattern, all countries in the world are busy coping with the historical and current opportunities and challenges brought by economic globalization. Cooperation in the field of international politics and economy has replaced the confrontation between the two blocs of East and West as an important feature of the development of the international pattern in the new century. However, the negative significance of economic globalization and its unbalanced situation with political multipolarity have created certain obstacles to international security and peaceful development. Since the 1990s, international cooperation and unilateralism under economic interdependence have developed side by side, conflicts and integration between different cultures have intensified, the gap between the economies of the North and the South has tended to widen, and contradictions and integration in the international political, economic, and cultural spheres have become a phenomenon in the international community.

Since the reform and opening up, China's economy has been growing quickly. However, even though the economy is growing quickly, there have been signs of uneven economic development between regions. For example, the eastern coastal region is growing much faster than the central, western, and northeastern regions. The development of the national economy shows an increasing gap. China's social essence and political mission are to eliminate polarization and eventually achieve common prosperity, so China began to develop the western region, and the development of infrastructure in the western region has historical roots and practical needs. The western region is vast and rich in resources, but due to the serious imbalance between the rate of infrastructure development and the rate of economic development, infrastructure development is the foundation for the country to develop and for the east and west regions to achieve resource sharing and talent interaction. So in October 2000, the Chinese central government, in order to reflect the country's key support for the western region, formulated and promulgated the "Implementation of the Western Development Plan." In October 2000, the State Council promulgated "Certain Policy Measures for the Implementation of the Western Development Strategy" to implement the Western Development Strategy and accelerate the development of the central and western regions, which is an important step in China's modernization strategy.

In 2003, the State Council promulgated the Opinions on Further Prosperity and Development of Ethnic Minority Culture, based on solving the outstanding difficulties and special problems in the development of ethnic minority culture, and raising the universal problems that exist in China's cultural construction. Folk cultural resources are fundamental to the inheritance and development of minority cultures and the basis of China's ethnic cultural diversity, so it is necessary to create a favorable economic environment for minority cultural development in order to solve the problems that have long restricted minority cultural development due to the lagging level of economic development. External support is an important factor in improving the economic environment for cultural development in ethnic areas, and increasing financial transfer payments is one of the main means. People rely on their cultural identity for a sense of belonging and spiritual sustenance, so reasonable measures must be taken to preserve their cultural characteristics so that traditional culture can be preserved and given new vitality in the process of economic globalization and modernization.

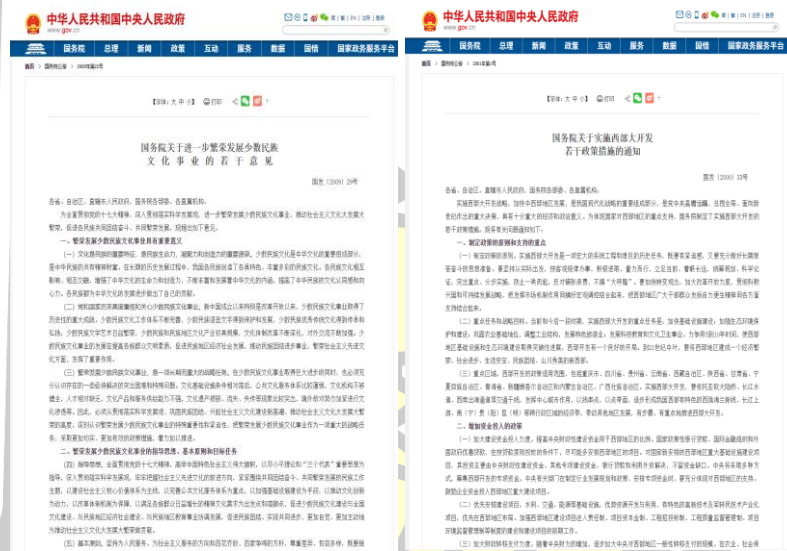


Figure 20 The promulgation of relevant policies and legal documents by the Chinese State Council in 2000 on the implementation of the Western Development Strategy and the 2009 Circular on Further Prosperity and Development of Minority Culture have largely contributed to the modernization and development of the Liangshan region. Policies that encourage and support ethnic minorities to express their cultural identity to the outside world in order to become cultural capital are used to develop products that generate income. This also reflects the issue of the country taking out its cultural heritage, creating a cultural identity, forming cultural capital, thus generating new income, using it to present itself to the outside world, and building the image of China as a cultural power.

Source: <https://www.gov.cn> (January, 2023)

Taking Liangshan Prefecture as an example, in response to the promulgation of relevant national policies, the government of Liangshan attaches great importance to the rescue and protection of traditional culture, and has implemented a series of corresponding ethnic culture protection policies, established the Yi Culture Museum and the Yi Costume Business Park, etc. The author will make an introduction with four cases.

(1) Establishment of the Museum of Slave Societies in Liangshan Prefecture

The Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, located in Xichang, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, is a building with the classical style of the Yi people. It is the first ethnic museum in China and the only thematic museum in the world that reflects the form of slave society. The museum covers an area of 45 acres, with a total construction area of 5,000 square meters. The large sculpture on the square is named the "Eagle of Liangshan" The museum's exhibition hall covers an area of about 1,000 square meters and is divided into three major parts: the rich and beautiful Liangshan, the long history of the nation, the slave society of Liangshan Yi before the democratic reform, and the great democratic reform. The whole complex is designed according to the ancient and elegant Yi architectural style. Each display hall shows the audience the politics, economy, religion, history, military, law, medicine, language and writing, literature, art, and customs and habits covered in the Yi slave social system in the form of objects, written narratives, and Figure materials. It has a high reference and supporting value for the study of history, anthropology, sociology, ethnology, and other social sciences and natural sciences, and the detailed and rich contents have made Chinese and foreign experts and scholars admire it after viewing it, and it is regarded as "a model of thematic museum."

The Liangshan Slave Society Museum collects 4,196 pieces of Yi cultural relics, including Yi lacquerware, Yi costumes, Yi scriptures, Yi silver ornaments, and other items. The main building adopts the traditional colors of red, yellow, and black Yi paintings, painted with patterns taken from nature such as the sun, moon, mountain, water, ram's horn, bird feather, fire sickle, and fish net, etc. The whole building has a distinct Yi style and similar choices of color patterns on Yi costumes. Since its establishment, the Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum has received a total of more than 500,000 domestic and foreign visitors. Some national leaders have also visited the museum and given it high praise. The museum is very important for people to understand the past slave society of Liangshan, the development of Yi society, and the history of Yi costume.



Figure 21 The sculpture "Eagle of the Yi People" at the Liangshan Yi Slave Museum shows a young Yi wearing the Yi costume "Chaerwa" with a heroic knot on his head and blowing a bullhorn, reflecting the courageous and strong character of the Yi people. Therefore, it can be seen that the identity of the Yi people. They have always relied on costumes as a material culture composed of symbols.

Source: Liangshan Yi Slave Society Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

(2) Establishment of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center of Liangshan Prefecture

Established in 2014, the Liangshan Prefecture Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center is dedicated to the organization and implementation of the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Liangshan Prefecture, including censuses, list declarations, and related work related to the protection of intangible cultural heritage. The Liangshan Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center elected the management of the first Liangshan Yi Costume Cultural Research Association, with Yi costume hereditary inheritor "Jabazize" as the president of the association, and the Liangshan government has also implemented various policies and activities to protect the inheritance and development of Yi costumes.

Yi embroidery in Liangshan Yi costume is the most representative cultural expression and carrier of the Yi people and is also an important part of the traditional ethnic folk craft of Yi costume. In September 2021, the fifth batch of China's national non-heritage list was announced, and the Liangshan Yi embroidery was successfully selected. In order to better protect the traditional Yi costume culture, the Liangshan Women's Federation, the Liangshan Culture, Broadcasting, and Tourism Bureau, and the Liangshan Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission have launched a series of

"Women's Poverty Alleviation Action," "Non-Foreign Heritage Workshop," and "Embroidery Out of Yi." Embroidery Out of the Yi Area" and other activities, as well as government funding to organize professional training for Yi costume practitioners.

At the same time, in order to pass down the traditional skills of Yi costume, some colleges and universities in Liangshan Prefecture and "Liangshan Nuosu Yi Culture Investment Co. Ltd." are, through joint school-enterprise education and research, incorporating the traditional Yi dress-making skills into the teaching and research system and opening "ethnic weaving and embroidery" majors to reasonably develop the traditional Yi dress-making skills and protect the intangible cultural heritage.

After years of cultivation of the "intangible heritage poverty alleviation" model, we have made certain achievements in passing down the traditional skills related to the national intangible cultural heritage "Yi costume" and helping to alleviate poverty precisely by, on the one hand, protecting and passing down the traditional skills of intangible cultural heritage and, on the other hand, contributing to the development of the Yi costume industry. On the other hand, it has explored a new path for developing the Yi costume industry, promoting the employment and income of handicraft workers, and helping to alleviate poverty.

(3) Establishment of Liangshan Ethnic Cultural and Creative Industrial Park and Liangshan Costume Cultural Square

Both the Liangshan Ethnic Cultural and Creative Industrial Park and the Liangshan Prefecture Costume Cultural Square are located in Xichang City, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, covering an area of 74,000 square meters. They were formally established in 2015 and have attracted nearly 100 merchants of Yi costumes, lacquerware, silver ornaments, and other cultural products to move in. It has formed the Liangshan All-Ethnic Cultural Industrial Park of observation and collection, learning, exchange, trading, display, demonstration bases for entrepreneurship, a Yi embroidery training center, and an incubation center for youth entrepreneurship. The construction of the creative industrial park can help practitioners of Yi costumes engage in the production, design, and sale of Yi costumes in a more systematic and professional manner.

The "Liangshan Jiajia Yi Traditional Costume Production Co., Ltd.," a non-genetic inheritor of Yi costume in Liangshan, was built here. In 2013, the annual output value of the company reached more than 1.6 million yuan, with a net income of 200,000 yuan. Since 2016, she has also actively promoted the Yi embroidery teaching project

to help the people, holding 8 Yi embroidery training courses every year and organizing 30 to 50 rural women around Xichang for free public welfare Yi embroidery teaching in each period. The company's Yi clothing has also been sold to India, Canada, Australia, Japan, and other countries. The company's Yi clothing has been sold to India, Canada, Australia, Japan, and other countries.

By the end of 2020, a cultural industrial park and 10 industrial bases will have been built in Liangshan, and the total annual output value of the Yi costume industry will have reached 139 million yuan, helping about 200,000 embroiderers in Liangshan to realize flexible employment at home and embroider a beautiful new life for Yi families with their own hands.



Figure 22 Liangshan Ethnic Culture Entrepreneurship Industrial Park and Liangshan Yi Costume Cultural Square are both located in Xichang, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture. It displayed an important role in making Liangshan known as the "Land of the Yi People."

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo :Ding Xuerui , 2022

(4) Establishment of the Torch Square in Liangshan Prefecture

The government of Liangshan Prefecture has always insisted on displaying the strong local characteristics of ethnic customs and achieving a win-win situation between the preservation of Yi traditional culture and tourism development, so it built the landmark of Liangshan Prefecture, Torch Square, which is located in the center of Xichang City, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture. The large circular square has 56 huge columns, each carved with a totem, symbolizing the great unity of the 56 ethnic groups in China. Every year, Yi compatriots and tourists from all regions gather here to participate in the annual Torch Festival. It is the most popular large multifunctional cultural square for people in Liangshan, which brings together exhibitions, tourism, food, performance, costume, and architecture. Among them, the first live-action fire show in China, the Liangshan Yi cultural tourism style live-action drama "A Re

Niu,"¹⁴ is also performed and exhibited here regularly, which is of great significance to our study of Yi cultural history, living customs, and costume culture.



Figure 23 "A Re Niu", a cultural performance of the Yi people in Liangshan Prefecture. It is an important place, where is representing self-identity of Yi people through their Costume in various situations.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo :Ding Xuerui , 2022

When compared to other Chinese provinces, Liangshan Prefecture ranks low in terms of economic development. However, with the help of national policies and the efforts of the Liangshan regional government, Liangshan Prefecture has also made brilliant achievements in preserving and developing traditional minority cultures. In recent years, Liangshan Prefecture has been focusing on building a brand of ethnic tourism and the preservation of non-traditional culture. With the superior natural, ecological, and ethnic resources in the region and the increasingly good transportation conditions, tourism has started to rise, and more and more people are visiting Liangshan not because of its poverty but because of the rich Yi folk culture in the region.

Taking the Yi people in the Liangshan region as an example, one can summarize the basic experience of the cultural development of ethnic minorities. One can

¹⁴ "A Re Niu" is the transliteration of the Yi language, which means "the youngest cousin" in the Yi language, implying innocence and purity, and is a genre of love songs in the Yi culture, rich in cultural connotation and elegant in tune. intangible cultural heritage list.

emphasize the importance of traditional ethnic culture in the development of socialist culture, and these achievements are based on the Yi people's love for and identity with their own people and ethnic culture. In studying the historical changes of the Liangshan Yi people, one cannot detach from the social structure from which the culture itself emerged. In the same social environment, different ethnic groups have different customs, food, housing, clothing, and lifestyles, and each ethnic group has its own culture. To promote the culture of its people, it does not only lie in the people themselves, but relevant state policy support is essential, as Marx said, "The prosperity of a nation is based on the policies of the government." Through the above, we can conclude that the development of society and each national culture are closely integrated and cannot be separated.

The Liangshan Yi people have always been in a special geographical and humanistic social and historical environment, and they have formed their own unique regional culture in their special geographical location, long historical heritage, and primitive religious worship. This regional culture has led to the formation of special Yi costumes, which have become a symbol of the identity of the Liangshan Yi people.

Conclusion

The Yi people and their cultural societies in the Liangshan region are related to the geography, settlement, and historical and socio-cultural contexts of each period from the past to the present. The environment and cultural traditions have affected "Yi people's costumes." The Yi costume has unique characteristics. Such Yi clothing is therefore a cultural object that indicates their ethnicity very well. At the same time, the ethnicity of Yi people is important for defining the local identity of Liangshan. Importantly, Yi people have been using their cultural identity for negotiating identity to another group or outsider world of community, including local and nation governments.

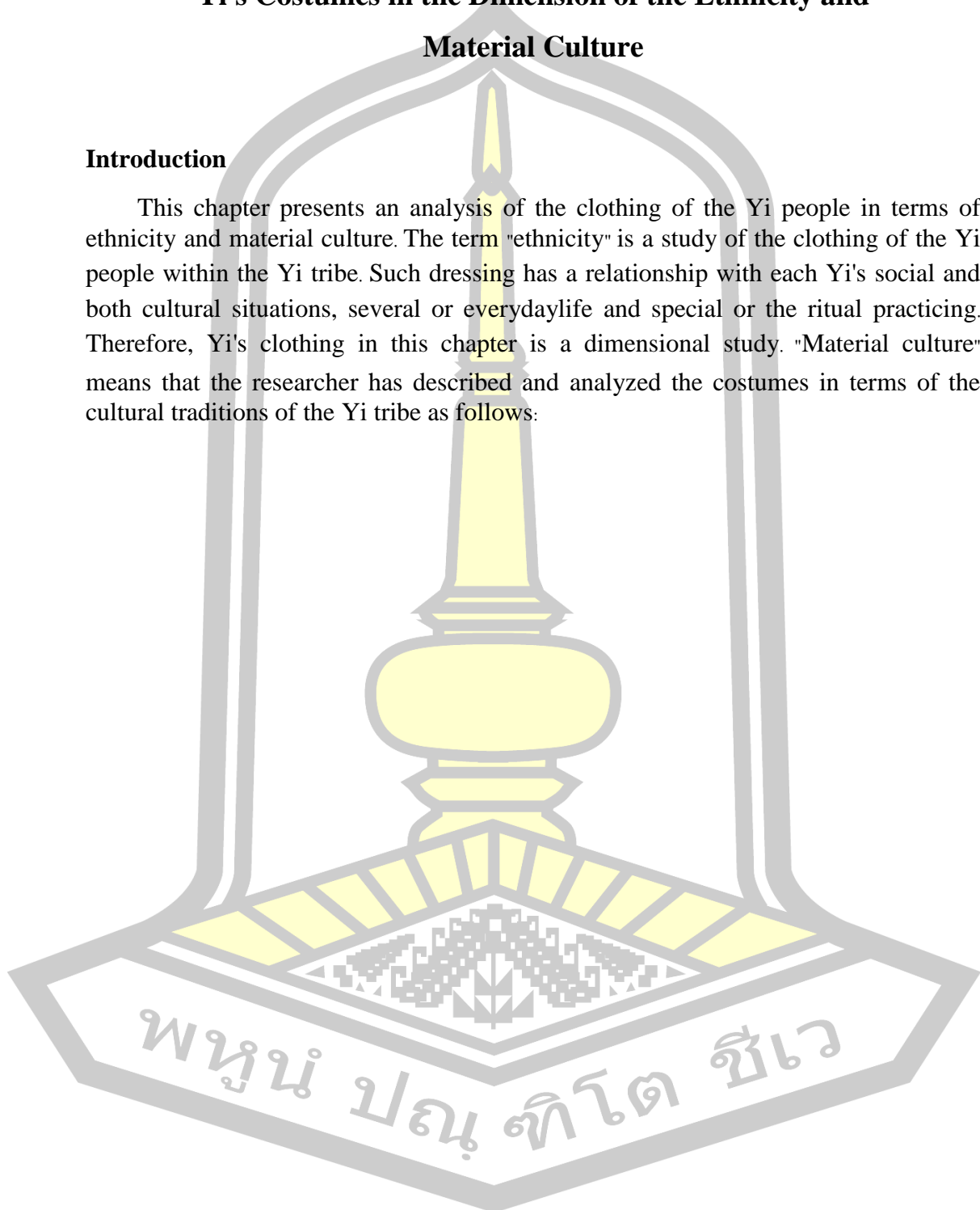
Thence, the Yi costume has been an important factor in shaping the characteristics of the region, city, and Yi communities from past to present. Which I will present in the next chapters in my research.

CHAPTER III

Yi's Costumes in the Dimension of the Ethnicity and Material Culture

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the clothing of the Yi people in terms of ethnicity and material culture. The term "ethnicity" is a study of the clothing of the Yi people within the Yi tribe. Such dressing has a relationship with each Yi's social and both cultural situations, several or everydaylife and special or the ritual practicing. Therefore, Yi's clothing in this chapter is a dimensional study. "Material culture" means that the researcher has described and analyzed the costumes in terms of the cultural traditions of the Yi tribe as follows:



Part 1 : Yi Costume and the Embodiment of Ethnicity

1.1 Costumes of the Liangshan Yi people in daily life

1.1.1 Costume differences among the three major dialectal regions of the Liangshan Yi people

In his 1963 book *Semiotic Aesthetics*, Roland Barthes, a 20th-century French structuralist theorist in the humanities and social sciences, pointed out that "dress is a systematic state of rules and symbols; it is language in a pure state." Costumes are like a silent language, with the symbolic function of characterizing different cultural meanings. The Yi people of Liangshan have constructed unique attitudes and behaviors toward warmth and sensory beauty, often highlighting the different national identities of the Yi people through the symbolic systems of style, pattern, ornamentation, color, craftsmanship, and technique. At the same time, there are very many life practices in the lives of the Yi people: rituals, festivals, daily life, and special life are all associated with dress, and through dress, the Yi people express who we are and what distinguishes us from outside groups. Through costume, we see the ethnic identity that is unique to the Yi people.

Costume is closely related to the development of ethnic culture, is a product of a long history, and is an important basis for ethnic identity. The costume of an ethnic group reflects the individual characteristics and aesthetic pursuits of that ethnic group. The Yi people are important members of many ethnic minorities and have a long and deep traditional culture. As an important carrier of their culture, Yi costumes fully demonstrate the historical changes, social patterns, economic life, and customs of the Yi people. There are many branches of the Yi people, and due to many factors such as regional differences in the Yi dialect, social and historical evolution, and their own continuous development, the major dialect areas have developed different styles of dress, and the different Yi branches have distinct regional characteristics. The Yi costume in China is divided into six major costume types, namely, Liangshan, Chuxiong, Honghe, Southeast Yunnan, West Yunnan, and Wumeng Mountain. The Liangshan Yi are of the Nuosu branch of the Yi ethnic group, and they belong to the northern dialect of Yi language in terms of language and the Liangshan type of Yi costumes.

In Liangshan, Yi's traditional costumes have various kinds, styles, and bright colors, with primitive simplicity combined with historic values. Yi Costumes has 300 styles and is praised as "History on Costumes" for its vivid cultural significance. The Ho's cave paintings found in Houhaizi and Zhaotong areas of Yunan Province show that the Yi people had already designed their own unique costume styles back in the East Jin Dynasty, more than 1,600 years ago.



Figure 24 The frescoes of Huo's tomb in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, unearthed in 1964, depict the attire of the Yi people with their heads in pointed buns and draped in felt, similar to the costume dress of the Yi people of future generations, and this particular dress is still passed down in the costume culture of the Yi people of Liangshan.

Source: <https://baidu.com.cn> (January , 2023)

The Yi people have many clans in Liangshan and are widely scattered among the vast area, which grants clear regional characters to their costume styles. The differences in patterns, hues, and lines can be found among people of different genders, ages, and marriage statuses. In fact, the differences can also be noticed among the three dialect regions, namely, Yinuo (costumes with loose trouser legs), Shengzha (costumes with mid-sized trouser legs), and Suodi (costumes with tight trouser legs). Yi costumes can be divided into work costumes, casual wear, wedding dresses, funeral dresses, religious dresses, and warrior's dresses. Both men and women of different ages, i.e., the old, the mid-aged, the youth, the children, and the infants, all have their proper dressing codes. (Hu Xiaoping, 2011)

A: Yinuo, the Loose Trouser Legs Costumes

The costume style of the Yinuo dialect region is characterized by "loose trouser legs," which are typically found in Meigu County and are popular in parts of counties like Meigu, Leibo, Gannuo, Zhaojue, Puge, and Jinyang of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture.

"Loose Trouser Legs", as its name implies refers to the loose trouser legs (with the width of a skirt) for men's trousers. The trouser legs may be 1.5 meters wide, and use up cloth that's over 3 meters long. The pants are made of sky-blue cotton, the crotches and the beveled lower parts of the legs are coarse and untrimmed. Stitches can be clearly noticed on the lower ends. The white-cotton-made belts are necessary ornaments for the Loose Trouser Legs. The males wear Chaerwa (a felt cloak) all year around, together with a warrior's belt (to carry swords in the old times). Black cloths are stuck to the Chaerwa on both left and right side from the bottom up. Males keep a traditional hairstyle, i.e. Tianpusaa¹⁵ (long tufts of hair on the calvarias). Costumes for the aged is simple but elegant with fewer patterns. However, it's quite loose in the waist and sleeves, and long in style. The old males also wear a chammy belly-bag or satchels with hanging chammy beards to carry tobaccos and steels (for flints). The over-clothes for women are usually with long sleeves, big fronts, right buttoning-down, and fine cross-stitched patterns on the backs, chests and arms. The patterns for the over-clothes are abundant, fine and delicate. The patterns in one single coat are symmetrically, delicately and exquisitely cross-stitched with nine different colored threads. The waistcoat worn outside the overcoat is of fine, easy, simple and spiffy features, with bar patterns on the chest and back collapsible, and fine hand made buttons on the front. Women wear layers of rectangular head-cloths, fastened with black or red caddice to the hair. Girls wear a single layer of head-cloth before the age right for dressing skirts. Married women wear lotus-leaf-form hats together with white or colored pleated skirts. The white skirts are of tubbiness form, with only black margins or margins with black threads. The colored skirts are largely identical with those from the other regions. Both men and women from this dialect region wear cloaks or Chaerwa made of pure white wool.

The yinuo Costumes is distinguished by its luxuriousness, passions, and free patterns.

¹⁵ "Tianpusa" is the transliteration of the Yi language, which refers to the hairstyle of Yi men. The hairstyle of Yi men is a product of primitive religious worship. During the lifetime of a Yi man, his hairstyle will undergo several changes. For example, children and unmarried men will have a long strand of hair on top of their heads. After marriage, the man will wear his hair in a braid and put it on his head. When a man dies, if he has children, he will comb the front of his head to create a pointed shape called "Tianpusa." Nowadays, there is no longer a distinction between specific age stages, and Yi men's hairstyles are uniformly called "Tianpusa."



Figure 25 Middle-aged men in the "Yinuo" region of Liangshan wear "Loose Trousers Legs"

This is typical of men in the Yinuo area and highlights the characteristics of the area.
Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Book, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022

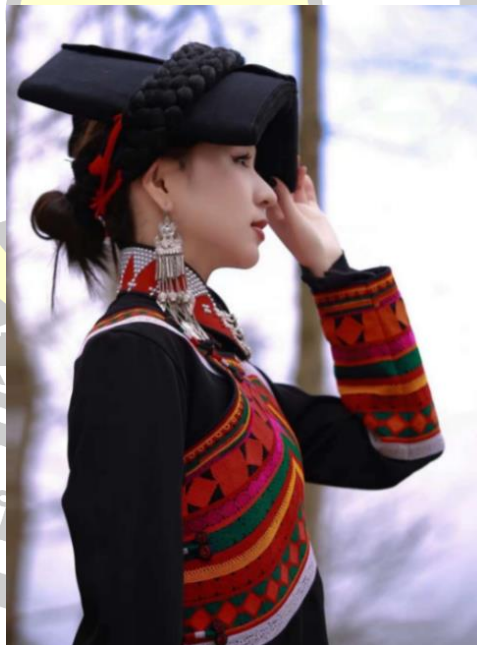


Figure 26 The most common dress for young girls in the "Yinuo"

region of Liangshan is usually in red, orange, yellow, and pink, which are contrasting colors used to decorate the lace and patterns of the dress, representing youthful energy and a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards life.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo: Ding Xuerui , 2022

B: Shengzha, the Mid-Sized Trouser Legs Costumes

The Costumes style of Shengzha dialect region is characterized by “medium sized trouser legs”, which can be found in counties like Yuexi, Xide, Mianning and Zhaojue, and parts of counties and cities like Jinyang, Yanyuan, Xichang, Muli and Dechang of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture.

Trouser legs for Men are about 80 centimeters wide. Attached to the under-knees part is a layer of black cloth, broidered with white cloth and wires. Two singular patterns are stitched to the center of both the front and back of the pants. The front parts of the belts are broidered. Shengzha lads wear black head-cloths, with “hero knots”¹⁶ on the right upper corner, and beeswax beads as ornaments. The overcoat is of right-opening and long sleeves style, with broidering on the opening line and hollowed-out laces from elbows to the sleeves. The Costumes for the aged is looser, but with more line patterns. Another feature of men's Costumes in the region is that they always wear a Chaerwa (a felt cloak) with fringes and disc florets on its sides. Differences can be noticed between mothers'and girls'Costumes. Mothers wear a broidered headgear with the form of a lotus leaf. The middle aged and the aged women's pleated skirts are mainly blue, and the pleats are often wider, and hung with unique triangular flowery bundles. A maid's underclothes has long sleeves and fronts, and is worn together with a waistcoat. The underclothes are usually attached with hollow-out cutting motifs through appliqueing or broidering, or decorated with disc flowerets. The waistcoat is right-buttoned-down, with laces stitched along the opening, and has patterns like horse teeth, pumpkin seeds, or window panes. The waistcoat is often embedded with rabbit furs or goat furs. The pleated skirts are made of cotton, and in black color on the margin and relatively contrastive colors like red, yellow, green, white, orange or pink on the body. Young women's headgear is a black cross-stitched rectangulan cloth, with layers of over-locked lining. The headgear is fastened to the braided hair, with its left side pricking up. The ear ornaments are mainly silver thread rings, red beads, beeswax beads or fish bone plates. The ornaments on necks are often silver plates or necklaces.

¹⁶Hero Knots: It is a kind of headdress for Yi men in the Liangshan area. The head is wrapped with blue cloth, and a long conical knot is tied on the right forehead to show the heroic spirit of majesty.

Shengzha Costumes is characterized by its decency, grace and nobility.



Figure 27 The youthful and energetic dress styles of the youth in the Yinuo region of Liangshan and the dignified and elegant dress styles of the youth in the Shengzha region of Liangshan form a stark contrast. The different dress styles form the characteristics of the different regional identities of the Yi people.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 28 On the left is the costume of a young woman in the Shengzha region of Liangshan, consisting of a short shirt with two layers of bright colors inside and outside. On the right is a middle-aged female costume from the Shengzha region of Liangshan, consisting of a long shirt, a smock, and deep and heavy colors. This is an important

reference for understanding the age-specific characteristics of clothing in the Shengzha region.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

C. Suodi, the Tight Trouser Legs Costumes

The Costumes style of Suodi dialect region is characterized by “tight trouser legs”, which is mainly found in counties like Puge and Butuo, and parts of counties or cities like Jinyang, Zhaojue, Ningnan, Xichang, Dechang, Huili, Yanyuan and Huidong of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture.

The “Tight Trouser Legs” style Costumes is unique in the region. The headgears for men are both wrapped and bound, with a 10-centimeter-long cloth knot as an ornament under the left ear. Men's coats are typically tight, and of short waists, high collars and right openings, and are made of a cloth known as “Weishanguo” in Yi language. Below the right opening, there are several big round silver buttons. The belts for men are made of cotton in blue, white or orange, and are empty within, in case to be filled with cash, coins, or tobaccos. The trousers are made of corduroy cotton with very tight trouser legs. Men also wear intensely patched thick felt cloaks to keep out the cold and moisture or to sleep in the open air. When the winter comes, they would put on a cloak of sheep furs, and sandals of hemp ropes or grass ropes together with sheep felt socks and leg-wrappings of cotton or felt to protect their feet or legs from the cold. Women's Costumes in the region is often in dark red, medium yellow, verdancy, light yellow or white, and thus quite colorful and intensely contrastive. The handwork is relatively rough, with the techniques of appliquéing, and of patterns like steels (for flint) or sheep horns. The underclothes has long sleeves, with brodering on the cuffs, and the symmetrical fronts and backs and are long enough to cover the knees. The overcoat is short-sleeved, with brodering all over, and silver flowerets on its collar. The long-sleeved underclothes and the short-sleeved overcoat look perfectly elegant and gorgeous when worn together. Females also wear hand-made pleated skirts, made of pure wool. The skirts use self-woven and self-dyed pure red wool for the upper parts, coarse cloth for the middle and blue cloths for the margins (the lower parts). The margins have red threads inserted. The pleats use double layer cloths, and are symmetric. The waistcoats for the maids use spun white wool, and are of cardigan style, and with no buttons. The sleeves are short and used only as ornaments. The unmarried young girls wear a special black triangular headgear with a cloth bundle as underlay, while the married women would wear round flat bamboo hats.

To sum up, the Suodi Costumes is unique with its primitive simplicity, wildness and warrior's boldness.



Figure 29 The women of the Liangshan Suodi region wear cape-style costumes all year round, which is their typical dressing feature. It exaggerates the shoulders from an aesthetic point of view, making them appear more three-dimensional and heavy and setting off the valiant posture of young women.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 30 Young Yi men wearing "Suodi" costumes participate in the Liangshan Yi beauty contest. The Yi men in the Suodi area share the common features of the Liangshan Yi men's costumes in their daily dress: Tianpusa, hero belts, heads wrapped in cloth, earrings in the left ear, and wearing

"Chaerwa". This is a characteristic of the dress of the Yi men in Liangshan Prefecture and has become a symbol of national identity.

Source: The scene of Liangshan Yi Beauty Pageant, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

As we can see from the previous discussion, in the daily life of the Yi people, Yi clothing is an important marker to distinguish different branches of the Liangshan Yi people from different regions of residence. The costumes of the three major dialect areas are influenced by the cultures of the surrounding ethnic groups, which has led to variations in costumes and the formation of regional characteristics, making the Yi costumes a symbol of the region of residence and a symbol of the ethnic identity of the Liangshan Yi people in different branches.

1.1.2 Age-specific features of Liangshan Yi costumes

Every life goes through the stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, middle age, and old age. In the daily life of the Yi people, there are specific dresses for each important stage of life to suit the social roles and physiological needs of different stages. In terms of the overall style of Liangshan Yi costumes, men's costumes are staid and generous, women's costumes are colorful and vividly patterned with meticulous and diverse techniques, children's costumes are bright and lively, and old-age costumes are simple, staid, and loose. All in all, the Liangshan Yi costumes are simple, heavy, broad, and the essence of truth and beauty.

A. Infants and children

In the Liangshan region, Yi infants and toddlers wear light, soft, and easy-to-move cotton and linen clothing when they are small, which is easy to put on and take off. Because the Liangshan Yi worship the tiger totem, which represents majesty and masculinity, warding off evil spirits and avoiding disasters while promoting peace and health, young children will grow up wearing tiger head hats and tiger head shoes. The tiger-head hat is usually made and finished by the women in the family and passed down from generation to generation. In ancient times, the Yi people used to use the black tiger as their totem, and they called themselves the "Tiger Ethnicity." The tiger image or pattern is a characteristic of Yi clothing, and the custom of wearing tiger patterns has been passed down to this day. Children wear these symbols, which symbolize ancient traditions and a collective consciousness, as a sign of recognition of the new member's lineage. Liangshan Yi children's tiger hats are designed with vivid, cute, and interesting tiger images, reflecting the Yi people's worship of the tiger totem. Tiger hats must all be sewn by hand. Tiger hats are often time-consuming to prepare and make, and they contain the full love of loved ones.



Figure 31 The style of the tiger head hat worn by Yi infants and toddlers in different dialect areas varies. On the left is the tiger head hat of the Yinuo area, with complete production and subdued colors, while on the right is the tiger head hat of the Suodi area, with bright colors and fine workmanship.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Culture and Craft Book, Su Xiaoyan, Accessed 2022

B. Colorful Children's Clothing

The children's clothing of Yi in Liangshan is characteristic and unique, especially the colorful and amorous clothing for the girls. The children's hats, in the form of cockscombs, tiger-heads, or round flat-tops, are the most fetching and sparkling of all. There is usually a woolen ball with a flower of red, yellow, blue, white, or purple on the top of a hat. Broidered fern patterns with yellow threads on a red grounding can be found on the surface of the hats. The fern patterns are typically Yi characters. Worshipping Scripture, an old Yi classic, writes, "We request earnestly to let the Yi's heirs thrive like sheep, the offspring to boom like ferns, and the descendants of the forefathers to prosper!" Thus, the Yi people use fern patterns on the children's hats in the hope of bringing luck and flourishing to their offspring.

In the Yinuo dialect, boys under 10 years old wear a 5-inch wide red cloth on the inside of their underwear. "In the "Shengzha" dialect area, boys under 10 years old do not wear a turban and shave their hair in the style of "Tian Pusa", allowing it to grow freely and leaving a strand of long hair pinned behind their ears. In the belief of the Liangshan Yi people, the "Tian Pusa" on the boy's head is a blessing for the family and will bring good luck and prosperity to the family. Therefore, the "Tian Pusa" on a boy's head is generally not easily cut off before he reaches adulthood, and even when he has to be cut as an adult, the "Tian Pusa" must be carefully kept and treasured. Minor girls have their own specific dress, their heads combed braids, the rich family will give their children's heads with a single layer of hat, a little younger will be pressed on the hat red head rope, older pressed braid. And will wear some small red beads and other

earrings. All Yi girls wear the "Skirt-Dressing Ceremony." Girls' skirts are divided into two parts. The upper part is in the form of a bucket and is either red or blue, while the white lower part takes the form of pleats. Some of the girlish skirts have three green threads (two red threads and a green one in the middle) on the joining of the two parts, or two distinct traversal threads on the drapes as a sign of puerility, and have green lists connected to the skirt margin identical to those of the grownups. When the girl becomes an adult, the most solemn skirt-changing ceremony is held to change her hairstyle and skirt to show that she is an adult.



Figure 32 A young girl wearing a "children's skirt."

The costume of the Yi people has been different from that of outside groups since childhood. This is a manifestation of the ethnicity of the Yi people.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Album, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022

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Figure 33 The little Yi boys were wearing Yi costumes and "hero belts."

The hero's belt is a belt that is worn diagonally from right to left on the body of a Yi man and is inlaid with white round objects. In the Yi language, "hero belt" is called "Du ta." The word "du" is translated into Chinese as "support, pillar," while "ta" means "load, protection." Therefore, in the Liangshan Yi costume culture, the hero belt is given the meaning of pillar and protection and has become a necessary accessory for every Yi man, which is also a typical dressing feature of Yi men.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Album, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022

C. Adolescence

The most distinctive sign of the age of Liangshan Yi costume is the ceremony of "Skirt-Dressing Ceremony" for women. When a young girl reaches the age of 15 or 16 and enters puberty, she has to take off her child skirt and put on an adult skirt to show that she has grown up, and this is followed by a grand skirt-changing ceremony. This ceremony is held to prohibit the participation of men, and on the day of the skirt ceremony, the family will invite a middle-aged woman with many children to preside over the ceremony, hoping that the girl will also have many children in the future, like her. The girl will comb the braid on her head to the front, then in a double braid, and wear a black hapa¹⁷ with lace and colorful earrings. Women will weave a wool pleated skirt from the girl's head, lower body, and thighs wrapped around three times, and then say some blessings. The girl will then take off the short skirt, replaced by a long skirt; this skirt is the upper part of the tube, the lower part of the pleated shape, and

¹⁷ "Hapa" is the translation of the Yi language, which refers to a rectangular piece of black or green cloth, with the edges of the cloth locked with flower thread, embroidered with beautiful patterns, inlaid with silver pieces, and other decorations. The way to wear "hapa" is to first comb the braid into two wrapped around the forehead, then fold the "hapa" into a trapezoid shape and wear it on the head. "Happa" is a specific dress of the Yi people and a symbolic item of national identity.

the more pleats, the more rich and auspicious, generally more black and red. It is a sign of maturity for young girls; when they wear it, it means that the girl has become an adult and can get married. When the "child skirt changing" ceremony is held, all the women in the village go to congratulate, and the host will share a bit of cooked lamb for the blessing ceremony with each guest as a token of blessing.

The "Skirt-Dressing Ceremony" is a traditional rite of passage for the Liangshan Yi people. It is based on their identification with their physical condition and folk beliefs. It has the positive social functions of establishing beliefs, granting rights, and clarifying obligations, which protect the person's smooth transition from girlhood to adulthood and the acquisition of new rights and obligations. This special ceremony is also a symbol of the Yi people's national identity.



Figure 34 A Yi girl undergoing the "skirt changing" ceremony, which is a traditional rite of passage for the Yi people in Liangshan and is based on their folk beliefs and national identity.

Source: <https://www.chinanews.com> (January , 2023)

D.Young and middle-aged period

Due to the division of the three major dialect areas, the young and middle-aged Yi people of Liangshan have their own distinctive costumes, but the style is basically the same in terms of the use of colors. The typical attire of young and middle-aged men and women of the Liangshan Yi people can be summarized as follows: young and middle-aged men wear a dark blue headband with a prominent hero's knot on the headband to show their male heroic spirit, three stringed beads on their left ear, a musk bag on their chests, and embroidered patterns such as the crescent moon,

window pane, fire sickle, and bull's eye on their tops. Feet wrapped in cloth, waist hanging daggers, and in the "Chaerwa," under the edge of a layer of black cloth as decoration. The "Tian pusha" on the top of the man's head is an ancient attire for men and is regarded as the dwelling place of the god of protection, sacred, and inviolable.

Young and middle-aged women wear tight-fitting and beautiful clothes, pay much attention to chest ornaments, shoulder ornaments, and sleeve ornaments, and like to wear red coral bead strings, silver earrings, and collar ornaments. The lower body wears a red, yellow, and green pleated skirt, and hangs a triangular purse in the upper right corner of the skirt to hold needlework or trinkets, with beautifully embroidered circular or semi-circular, bull's-eye, fire sickle, fern-shaped, and other patterns, decorated with five colors. On the chest, they like to wear a beautifully decorated bamboo string case or needle case, which contains copper or bamboo strings or needles, and on top of their heads, they wear a rectangular headband made of black cloth folded into multiple layers. Young and middle-aged women wear tight-fitting and beautiful clothes, pay much attention to chest ornaments, shoulder ornaments, and sleeve ornaments, and like to wear red coral bead strings, silver earrings, and collar ornaments. The lower body wears a red, yellow, and green pleated skirt, and hangs a triangular purse in the upper right corner of the skirt to hold needlework or trinkets, with beautifully embroidered circular or semi-circular, bull's-eye, fire sickle, fern-shaped, and other patterns, decorated with five colors. On the chest, they like to wear a beautifully decorated bamboo string case or needle case, which contains copper or bamboo strings or needles, and on top of their heads, they wear a rectangular headband made of black cloth folded into multiple layers.

When Yi women have children, they wear middle-aged clothes, and the colors and styles of their costumes differ significantly from those of young people. In most areas of Liangshan, the iconic change is in the style of women's headkerchiefs, which are generally worn by Yi youths as square headkerchiefs with a thousand layers of tiles but change to round headkerchiefs with lotus leaves after having children to show that they have become mothers and are no longer allowed to wear square headkerchiefs. The most prominent feature of Yi women's middle-aged costumes is that they reflect the stability and atmosphere of the wearer, and the colors are no longer as bright as those of young people's costumes. Middle-aged women have the most contact with their children, and their dress indirectly influences the formation of their children's personalities and values, and the dress code is an example of teaching their children to follow rules and order.



Figure 35 Young men and women dressed in Yi garb. Yi costumes have the function of age identification, so the Yi have specific dresses at each stage to suit their social roles at different stages, which is a special functional expression of ethnic identity.

Source: Yi Family Website, Jiang Zhichong, Accessed 2021



Figure 36 By the headkerchief worn by the Yi girl. It can be judged that the Yi girl is unmarried, which is the functional embodiment of marital identification in Yi costumes.

Source: <http://www.baidu.com>, (January , 2023)



Figure 37 The lotus leaf cap is made of 8 pieces of triangular green cloth sewn together; the shape resembles a lotus leaf, hence the name. In the culture of the Yi people, wearing a lotus leaf cap means that the woman has given birth to children.
Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Album, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022

E. Old Age

After entering middle and old age, the dresses of the elderly in all parts of Liangshan Prefecture are characterized by wide clothes, wide sleeves, and deep tones, and the practical principles of comfort, softness, and convenience are emphasized. The clothes are generally made of plain fabrics such as sky blue, green and purple, green, and white, and the sleeves are wider than those worn by young people. The decorative patterns are simpler, usually only decorated with blue trim or blue trim. In order to keep warm, the elderly Yi people usually wear the "chaerwa."





Figure 38 An elderly Yi man wearing a "Chaerwa". From birth to old age, the "Chaerwa" has become the emblem of the Yi people, symbolizing their unique ethnic identity.

Source: Xichang Deep Blue Visual Studio, Hu Yao, Accessed 2022

As time has passed and people from different cultures have met and mixed, popular and fashionable modern clothes have come and gone, and so have Liangshan Yi clothes. In daily life, due to foreign popular culture, the dressing of Yi people has begun to mix and match with foreign popular clothing. For example, some Yi women wear Yi clothes and dresses on top, Yi headgear on their heads, and single pants on the bottom. Some young and middle-aged men and women wear Yi clothes on top and popular pants underneath. Students and children wear some modern and popular clothing, while older people generally keep the most traditional Yi dresses to wear. However, even in these cases, during special events such as weddings, funerals, and large events, Yi people must wear their own costumes to participate. This is a customary rule and a reflection of their national identity.

1.2 Costumes of the Liangshan Yi in ceremonies and festivals

1.2.1 Liangshan Yi Wedding Costumes

Throughout the historical migrations and cultural changes, there are many rituals of the Liangshan Yi people that still maintain their ancient, profound, and humane cultural heritage, moderate and maintain the social order of the Yi region, reinforce the ethnic identity of the community, constantly satisfy the spiritual needs of the Yi people, and carry rich ethnic emotions and deep social memories. Many rituals have

specific meanings only in the communities to which they belong.(Peng Zhaorong, 2017)

Due to modern socio-economic development, changes in the concept of life, and the convenience of transportation and information, the traditional way of life in many areas of Liangshan has been gradually "Sinicized," and young people usually do not wear their own national costumes, but in their traditional festivals and life rituals (such as bar mitzvahs, weddings, funerals, etc.), both men and women, young and old, will participate in the most expensive and exquisite costumes, preserving the ancient customs and dress code of the Yi people in their original form. This is not only a way of identifying with one's ethnic identity as a Yi but also a way of remembering one's ancestors, and the traditional Yi costume has become the most important prop for entering the ritual context.

Rites and customs originate from customs and traditions, and the formation of customs and traditions is a kind of historical inheritance and development that is agreed upon by the living habits of different social groups in different regions, and marriage is one of the most important rites and customs of the Yi people. (Sha Madage, He Wenhai, 2022)

The Liangshan Yi people are quite unique in their wedding customs. The Yi people pay special attention to the bride's dowry, and usually before the wedding ceremony, the groom's family will send the bride's family a special gift of money to buy the dowry. As a carrier of Liangshan Yi wedding customs, the wedding dress is more grand in style than the usual clothing, the bride's clothes are usually sewn by the bride's own hands before the wedding, and the Bi Mo presided over the blessing ceremony in the afternoon of the day. The bride's dowry should generally be inside and outside two sets, one of which must be white. In addition, the wedding woman must also be draped in black or green wool felt. On the wedding day, the bride needs to dress under a fruit tree, tie up her hair with a red head rope, wrap her head with a turban, and wear a silver hair ornament, which is one of the most valuable accessories for Yi women getting married. It is made of a rectangular piece of wool for the bottom, inlaid with flowers and silver pieces, the shape of the silver pieces being mostly in the shape of the sun and the moon, inlaid with some auspicious patterns, and some brides from rich families also wear it on their heads. "Silver headdress." This headdress is entirely made of silver and is beautifully crafted. Finally, put on the wedding cover; this cover is double, made of colorful cloth, decorated with chicken feathers, and has a festive, blessed meaning.

In the Suodi region, women usually get a valuable chest ornament, called "Zezefu" in Yi, when they get married. It is about two to three feet long, weighs five or six pounds, and consists of six to eight individual pieces. It is linked by a silver chain in the form of a ring. The lower center is a semi-circular body with a pattern of the

sun, moon, birds, and other auspicious motifs. The rest of the pieces are symmetrical and have the same shape; they jingle when they walk. (Ma Xiaohua,2006) The day of the wedding, at 4:00 am, the bride will begin to change clothes. The bride wears a set of new and colorful bridal clothes outside and then puts on a blue and black chador. First and foremost, the bride's hair cannot wear the traditional square head hat on her wedding day and must instead wear a round head cover. Women can only wear a garden head cover once in their lives; remarried people cannot wear a garden head cover, so if you ask women whether they have worn a garden head cover, it is a euphemism for asking women whether they are married.

When the bride is carried into the yard of the groom's house, the elders set up a ladder and put the hat on the bride's head on the house; the saddle of the bride's horse is also put on the house; and the person carrying the bride passes under the saddle with the bride on his back. The groom's brother will carry the bride into the temporary hut, then someone will bring fried rice to the bride, the bride will taste it, and then a minor girl with the same zodiac sign will comb the bride's hair three times, and then a woman with prosperous children and grandchildren will ask a woman to remove the bride's makeup, uncover the turban, take off the outside old-age clothes to reveal the gaudy bridal clothes, then comb the bride's draped hair into a double braid, put on the gaudy square headband, take off the robes, and the bride The old-age clothes and male head coverings are kept by the brother who carries the bride. The bride's feet must not be in direct contact with the ground during the bridal party's departure from the bride's house to the man's small hut, and when she needs to rest and stand, the ground must be padded with chaerwa, etc. that can be stepped on to show the isolation, and the bride must not get dirt. (Yi people Hu Yizhen.2022:interview)

In the Yi wedding ceremony, the bride's clothes, the "chaerwa "she wears, and the hat she wears all have folkloric meanings. They show the Yi people's hopes and blessings for marriage and keep the wedding ceremony process pure. They also show respect for the bride and the Yi people's unique way of wearing clothes, which is a way of establishing and keeping the Yi people's unique national identity.

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Figure 39 A Yi bride from the "Shengzha" region undergoes a dressing ceremony. The wedding is an important turning point in the life of the Yi people in Liangshan, and the bride's dress is elaborately embroidered for a long time before the wedding, and the style is gorgeous and exquisite. The wedding costumes of the Yi people in the three dialect areas have different characteristics, and the costume characteristics of the Yi ancestors can be seen centrally in the regional wedding costumes, which are a reflection of ethnicity.

Source: Fieldwork in the Shengzha region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 40 According to traditional folklore of the Liangshan Yi people, when the bride's brothers carry her, the bride can only sit sideways on the man's back. This is a traditional Yi ethnic cultural ritual.

Source: Fieldwork in the Shengzha region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 41 The groom's family and friends greeted the bride in traditional Yi dress, neatly dressed to represent respect for traditional Yi wedding customs.

Source: Fieldwork in the Shengzha region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 42 The author (left) and the bride (right) are wearing Yi costumes from the Shengzha region. The author is wearing a bright and colorful dress for the young women of Shengzha, while the bride is wearing a hand-sewn dress with a headdress made of sterling silver, which makes her look luxurious and grand. The author is not a member of the Yi ethnic group, but he came to the traditional Yi wedding wearing traditional Yi costumes, which is a kind of respect and recognition of the Yi ethnic identity.

Source: Fieldwork in the Shengzha region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

1.2.2 Liangshan Yi Funeral Costumes

Calamity, disease, and death are the greatest sufferings faced by human beings. As the last ritual in the ritual of life, Liangshan Yi funeral customs originate from the unique religious beliefs and ancestral spirit worship in the daily life of the Yi people and hold the unique life consciousness and beliefs of the Yi people, containing rich cultural connotations and value pursuits. Calamity, disease, and death are the greatest sufferings faced by human beings. As the last ritual in the ritual of life, Liangshan Yi funeral customs originate from the unique religious beliefs and ancestral spirit worship in the daily life of the Yi people and hold the unique life consciousness and beliefs of the Yi people, containing rich cultural connotations and value pursuits.

The funeral practices of the Liangshan Yi people are mainly cremation,¹⁸ and according to traditional burial customs, funerals include rituals and invocations of the soul. The Liangshan Yi attach great importance to the end-of-life rituals of individuals as a significant and solemn event, so even though they are not usually well-dressed, the funeral clothes must be taken seriously after death and must be properly prepared before the deceased dies. Male elders are required to wrap a standard scarf in a bun to maintain the dignity of the deceased. In the Yinuo and Shengzha regions, male elders are required to wear a bun-like hairstyle and a white shirt. Female elderly people should wear white skirts after death; the outer clothing is the same as the daily dress, and the clothing is mainly blue and green; avoid wearing red and yellow clothes. Because the Liangshan Yi believe that the soul still exists after death, the soul has to wear new clothes to meet the ancestors, and the clothes worn must be recognized by the ancestors in order to be accepted back to the clan, so the life clothes should stick to the old customs and be prepared to sew before birth. (Qumu Yuezhi ,2020)

The Liangshan Yi attach great importance to funeral costumes because of their ancestor worship. In the view of the Liangshan Yi, the spirits of their dead ancestors are still alive and have a strong influence on real life, and even control the life and death of the living, so they have many beliefs and customs about the spirits of the dead. There is also a legend among the Liangshan Yi people that in ancient times, there were only two families in the world, namely, the "Pressing and Waxing" families, who did not know what death was because their souls did not leave their bodies. The gods in the sky could not bear the sight of humans killing each other, so they used

¹⁸ Cremation refers to the burial of a corpse by fire, commonly known as "cremation," which has been prevalent in the Yi region for a long time. In Yi cremation, two long wooden sticks and nine short wooden sticks are woven into a single frame, and the deceased is placed on the firewood for burning while the Yi Bimo performs the cremation ceremony.

iron to strike down, and one person from each family died, and the soul of the dead would take away the soul of the living, causing the living to die, and thus the phenomenon of death began.

The legend reflects the soul concept of the Liangshan Yi people, that is, they regard the soul as an object that dominates the human spirit, so after the death of the Yi people, a soul-sending ceremony is held by the Bimo to send the soul of the deceased to the ancestral home to meet with the ancestors, during which the soul of the living can easily go with the soul of the deceased or even go to the ancestral home without knowing the return. Bimo then recites the "soul redemption sutra" to bring the souls of the living back to reality. In the Yi funeral, for the death of the old people who have reached the end of their lives, there is a proverb among the Yi people that says, "If an old man should go, he should go, and if the children and grandchildren should be happy, they should be happy," so if the old people have reached the end of their lives, they will be treated as a happy event, and during this period, some wrestling and horse racing competitions will be held, and the winners will be rewarded. Therefore, the funeral ceremony of the Liangshan Yi people is a very grand event with many rituals, which can take as few as three days or as many as nine days.

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According to Yi legend, in the soul-sending ceremony, because they will not be recognized and accepted by the ancestors without wearing Yi costumes, they will become spirits that endanger the living, so in the funeral ceremony, people will wear their most grand Yi costumes to show their worship to the ancestors and respect to the dead. (Yi people Qubi Yuexi. 2023: interview) The concept reflected in the beliefs of the ancestral spirits of the Liangshan Yi people has a special function of maintaining the order of the community and is a manifestation of the cohesion of the Yi people and a spiritual force that sustains the Yi community, while the Yi costume has

become the material carrier of this spiritual force, a racial emblem, and a symbol of the ethnic identity of the community.



Figure 43 Before attending a funeral, the Yi people wear the grandest of Yi costumes and dress cleanly as a sign of respect for the deceased.

Source: Fieldwork in the Yinuo region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 44 Young Yi people dressed in costumes and wore "chaerwa" for the funeral ceremony. Among the folk activities of the Yi people in Liangshan, the Yi people pay more attention to the funeral ceremony, which is the most solemn and passionate ritual in life, so the funeral dress is more grand and gorgeous than the wedding dress. The unique funeral ceremony reflects the ethnicity of the Yi people.

Source: Fieldwork in the Yinuo region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 45 This is a Yi funeral in the "Yinuo" region of Liangshan, where the Yi people prepare to participate in the soul-sending ceremony. Because of the origin of the Yi tribe, the Yi people's ancestors were in the north, so the Yi people would use rituals to guide the spirits of the deceased to the north.

Source: Fieldwork in the Yinuo region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022





Figure 46 The Yi people are holding a soul-sending ceremony. The clothing and unique funeral rituals worn by the Yi people during major funeral ceremonies reflect ethnicity and are a symbol of the Yi group's national ethnic identity.

Source: Fieldwork in the Yinuo region of Liangshan, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

1.2.3 Liangshan Yi Traditional Festival Costumes

The Liangshan Yi are a festival-loving people who enjoy the joy of festivals all year. The Yi have dozens of traditional festivals, many of which have their origins in rituals evolving from ancestor worship, heroic remembrance, and expectations for the future; some are directly derived from production, life, or love legends. In addition to the general beauty pageant and shepherding festival, the two biggest festivals throughout the year are the Yi Year and the Torch Festival. The Year of Yi is a traditional festival of the Liangshan Yi people and is also known as the Yi Spring Festival. It is usually decided by local elders, or "bimo," who know the calendar and choose the date. The Year of Yi and the Torch Festival have some of the same folk activities, but each has its own focus, compared to the Torch Festival, which has more entertainment and is more popular among young people. The festival is more entertaining, and young people prefer to celebrate it, and the costumes are more grand and gorgeous due to the season.

The torch festival is known as "Duze" in Yi, which means fire festival. Originally, it was a folk custom of the Yi ancestors, who used torches to ward off insects and evil spirits and to hope for a good harvest. Over the course of its long history, this custom has gradually evolved into the folk culture festival it is today. The Yi Torch Festival

has a long history and has been celebrated for more than a thousand years, since the Han and Tang dynasties. Before the Torch Festival, each family prepares food, such as pigs, cows, sheep, and chickens, and also prepares clothes for the family to wear for the festival, including hats, clothes, and skirts for girls; some girls will sew clothes and pants, belts, or flower bags for their loved ones. The boys will buy earrings and accessories for their sweethearts. (Su Xiaoyan,2008) The torch festival lasts for three days, and it is customary for people to hold a fire lighting ceremony with dried fern grass after dinner on the night of the festival, and then the whole village goes to the fields and hillsides near the village with torches made of dried branches. Young men and women in traditional costumes hold hands and dance in a circle around the bonfire, while young men and women play and sing with each other under the bonfire, singing and dancing all night long, taking the opportunity to seek the object of their love. During the festival, various kinds of entertainment competitions are held, including traditional events such as bullfighting, horse racing, wrestling, beauty pageants, and clothes races. The winners of bullfights and wrestlers often become the objects of girls' courtship and affection. The Yinuo and Suodi regions, which are the birthplace of the torch festival and are known as the "home of the torch festival," keep the most complete and unique torch festival folklore and costumes.

Early in the morning of the Torch Festival, no matter how far away from the torch field, people wearing traditional Yi costumes have to rush to the torch field in groups, and when they arrive at the woods next to the torch field, the girls start to dress up before the festival. This is an important opportunity for them to showcase themselves and their fine traditional Yi costumes. In the most grand beauty pageant ceremony, the girls who participate in the pageant are dressed in local costumes, wearing black, silver-embellished paddles or disc hats and traditional Yi long shirts and half sleeves decorated with various patterns. Among them, the Puge and Butao costumes, with large silver buttons pinned on the lapels and gorgeous silver ornaments hanging on the chest and back, are dressed in spirited black and white or blue and red pleated skirts, with bright yellow umbrella covers over their heads. In short, the whole attire is heavy and gorgeous. The girls walk slowly around the race track for several weeks to show off their gorgeous costumes, and then line up for the announcement of the competition's ranking. The girls who won the "Golden Suoma"¹⁹ award that year wore clothes that became the trend of the year. (Shama Dage. 2023: interview)

The Liangshan Yi Torch Festival is the grandest festival of the Yi people. The colorful art and culture of Liangshan Yi beauty pageant costumes bring beauty to the

¹⁹ Suoma flower is the transliteration of the Yi language, which means azalea. The Yi people use the term "Suoma flower" to describe or address women, and Golden Suoma means "the most beautiful Yi girl".

audience and show the characteristic aesthetic concepts, aesthetic characteristics, customs, religious beliefs, and historical accumulation of the Yi people. The Yi beauty pageant costumes are closely related to the economic life, cultural traditions, and psychological cognition of the Yi people and reflect their ethnicity through the style, color, and pattern of the costumes, which are the unique cultural characteristics of the Yi people and represent their national identity.



Figure 47 Liangshan Prefecture is the site of the 2019 beauty pageant event. Various regions of the Yi people are wearing Yi clothing to participate in the beauty contest; different regions wear different styles of clothing. Clothing has become a criterion for judging a region and is an important part of folk culture. The torch festival is also the most important place to showcase Yi costume culture.

Source: Sichuan Daily Liangshan All Media Center, Wang Yun, Accessed 2019

Like a silent language, costume has the symbolic function of representing different cultural meanings and has long received attention from sociolinguistics, semiotics, and aesthetics. Similarly, dress, as a product of both material and spiritual civilization, has long been regarded by anthropological studies as a cultural representation and a way to understand, grasp, and study the culture of ethnic groups. The Yi costume is a reflection of Yi life, which has evolved over a long period of time, gradually reflecting its social function. Yi costumes have the functions of different clans' outgoing identification, occupation identification, status identification, age identification, and marriage identification. This special use of clothing has formed the unique national identity of the Yi people.

Part 2 : Yi Costumes and Material Culture

2.1 Production and Craft Techniques of Liangshan Yi Costumes

As a material form, clothing relies on certain material materials, and the level of development and quality of material materials determine the quality and style of clothing in terms of texture, style, color, and the degree of craft refinement. The diversity of expression and style of Liangshan Yi clothing is closely related to the well-preserved traditional textile technology and handicrafts. The traditional clothing

materials of the Liangshan Yi are mainly self-rolled, self-spun, self-woven, and self-dyed, and the fabrics are mainly made of wool, which keeps you warm, and hemp, which can dissipate heat to adapt to the changing and complicated climate of the alpine mountains and is durable. Therefore, in the daily dress of the Liangshan Yi people, they do not choose such fine and soft fabrics as silk, silk, and satin but use natural, natural color, heavy, and rough wool as the main fabric, so that the dress style has a rustic, ancient, and extensive beauty.

Weaving a Yi costume is not an easy task and requires a lot of time and effort, which can be summarized in the following 4 steps:

2.1.1 Composition of lines

The early costume fabric of the Liangshan Yi people was "fire grass cloth," woven from the fibers on the back of fire grass leaves after twisting the threads, and made into fire grass clothes and fire grass bags through the fire grass threads.²⁰ With the invention and progress of spinning technology, human beings began to use natural short fibers and various types of hemp, wool, and other long fibers for weaving. Nowadays, the most popular fabrics used in the original costumes of the Liangshan Yi people are hand-rolled woolen felts and woolen plain and twill fabrics woven by special textile machines. At present, the materials used in the production of Liangshan Yi costumes are mainly high-quality sheep's wool, which is raised locally. The wool is then spun with a special "spindle"²¹ to form a fine wool thread, and the thread is successfully made into the next step of the weaving process.

²⁰ Fireweed is a common herb in southwestern China, with a white film on the back of its leaves. The Liangshan Yi people will pick fireweed, sprinkle it with local sour plum water, and then twist the fleece on the back into thread while tearing it off to make fireweed yarn for weaving into cloth.

²¹ A spindle, a special hand tool for spinning, is made of wood and spun by self-weight or continuous rotation.



Figure 48 Figure 48 A Yi woman makes woolen thread with a spindle tool. A purely handcrafted Yi costume is made with extreme care from a collection of lines, which is a reflection of the material culture of Yi costumes.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.1.2 Arrangement of fabrics- Waist machine weaving

The Yi people of Liangshan have a special machine for weaving cloth called the "waist machine." The loom is extremely simple in composition, with neither a frame nor a body, and it is a horizontal backstrap loom. In "waist machine" weaving, first the ends of the warp threads are tied to the wooden pile and rolled on the axis; the warp threads²² must be kept horizontal with the ground; the warp threads on the belly of the front are rolled on the axis and then pulled by the ends of the belt tied to the waist; in order to tense the warp width, weavers also need to sit on the ground with their legs flattened before stretching. This is because they need to use the belt and their bodies to adjust the tension of the cloth. Liangshan Yi "waist machine" components are relatively simple, but they can be completed by hand through human weaving and can reflect the human scale, but also weave extremely complex "human" twill fabric.

The spinning and weaving process of the Liangshan Yi people also reflects its long historical characteristics, Although the "spinning tools" for spinning and the

²² Warp and weft: Woven fabrics are generally made of two groups of lines woven longitudinally and horizontally; the longitudinal line is called the warp, and the horizontal line is called the weft.

"waist machine" for weaving have undergone many changes over the years, the structure is simple and the technology is simple, so they are still in active use in the Liangshan Yi region today. These artifacts and techniques are a testament to the wisdom of the ancestors of the Liangshan Yi people and the evolution and development of traditional Yi costume techniques.



Figure 49 Yi women use waist machines to weave cloth.

The diversity of artistic forms and styles of Liangshan Yi costumes is closely related to the well-preserved ancient "waist machine" spinning skills and weaving techniques.

This is precious material culture.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Album, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022

2.1.3 The presentation of color - Plant Mud Dyeing

The Yi people living in the Daliang Mountains explored the art of dyeing wool products and clothing items using plant dyeing methods long ago and have mastered the techniques of growing, making, extracting, and dyeing various types of dyes in their long-term living and production practices. (Lili, 2010)

The production process of the plant mud dyeing technique can be summarized into four steps. In the first step, the wet mud collected from the swamp is packed in a bucket. The wet mud is covered with a natural oil film, and the lower layer of black mud, which is brownish-black in color, is dug out after it is picked up. The drying of buckwheat and other plant materials burned into wood ash, the ash in the barrel, water to wash it out, the production of finished wool twisted or rolled into felt, soaking it in the barrel for a day and night, and then repeatedly kneading and pressing it into the black mud until completely soaked were the next steps. In the third step, the collected mulberry branches are scraped off the surface black bark, and the thin yellowish bark in the middle is used, left for some time to turn light purple, and then stored. Collect and store some green walnuts and their leaves with black skin in late autumn. In the

fourth step, to dye a Chaerwa, 5 kg of water, 1 kg of each walnut bark and mulberry bark, salt, and white wine are boiled in a pot, and when the pot becomes sticky and oily, it is boiled for 0.5 h. During the process, plant coloring materials such as sour plums are continuously added, and the color of the dye in the pot changes continuously (from clear water color to brownish red, grayish blue, and grayish black). After its color is stable and unchanged, the mud-soaked fabric or wool is put into the dye pot, and finally the dyed material is buried deeply for a day and a night to be taken out and dried out. At first, the color is grayish black, and then the process is repeated about three times for a week to reach the desired color. The dyed fabric becomes the basic fabric for Yi costumes, and only then can it be embroidered or sewn and cut.(You Lingli,2014)



Figure 50 The dyeing process of Yi traditional costumes, "Chaerwa,"

The traditional Chaerwa will be dyed on the original wool products, and after the dyeing, white and blue colors will be added, which is beautiful and generous, and the traditional dyeing technique gives the "Chaerwa" ethnic characteristics.

Source: <http://www.people.com.cn> (January, 2023)

2.1.4 "Ornamentation of patterns" - embroidery trim

After spinning, weaving, and dyeing, the fabric needs to be embroidered to create a beautiful pattern from material selection, composition, coloring, and stitching. Due to the different geographical locations, the decorative techniques of the different dialects of the Liangshan Yi differ, and even for the same technique, the color palette and the stitching techniques vary. In addition, different decorative techniques are adopted according to the specific parts of the decoration, and the final effect and the visual form presented also vary. For example, the ornaments on the shoulders and bodice are usually embroidered with silk threads of different purity in the same color; yellow, blue, green, blue, white, and red threads are used together.

From the perspective of aesthetics and durability, Liangshan Yi embroidery is mainly used on the lapels, collars, cuffs, hems, skirts, and headpieces of clothing, as

well as on accessories such as square bags, triangular bags, and purses. However, Liangshan Yi embroidery techniques mainly include flat embroidery,²³ picketing,²⁴ applique,²⁵ lock-stitching,²⁶ piping,²⁷ and A variety of decorative patterns are embroidered with various colors of cloth, silk threads, and stitches, and the embroidery method is flexible and varied, combining various techniques such as pressing, picking, and setting to make the hues natural and beautiful and enhance the impact of visual effects, which makes Yi costumes look more exquisite and beautiful. In addition, the creation and expression of Yi costume patterns include the use of small strips of cloth of varying sizes and colors to form colorful floral decorations according to the desired pattern.

Cultural traditions and living customs have fostered the aesthetic awareness of the Liangshan Yi people in terms of costume. The traditional Yi costumes are basically handmade, natural, and simple. The techniques of spinning, weaving, dyeing, and embroidery include twisting, weaving, embroidering, and dyeing through the processes of spinning, looping, vegetable dyeing, and embroidering. These handicraft techniques are used in the production of the Yi "felt," "chaerwa," and "pleated skirt," and they are used to pass on the Yi costume design and culture. (Li Ming P.236) The fine embroidery, the various types of decorative techniques on the surface of the garments, the techniques of stitching and cutting, the techniques of weaving and felting, and the techniques of dyeing plants are all inherited and further evolved from generation to generation, reflecting the behavioral norms and cultural boundaries of the Yi people in Liangshan and thus building the distinctive ethnic characteristics and artistic style of the Yi costumes in Liangshan.

²³ Flat embroidery: It is the most intuitive and concise method, which can embroider the object as it is, has a strong visual effect, and is often used on the cuffs of clothes.

²⁴ picket: This method is used to embroider abstract geometric or floral patterns with silk thread that follows the warp and weft of the fabric.

²⁵ Applique: It means folding the cloth into a square, then sewing it with thread to make various patterns, then cutting it with the pattern and sewing it on the clothes.

²⁶ Lockstitching: refers to the use of locks to make jagged or other shapes, usually used on trouser legs, cuffs and other edge positions.

²⁷ piping: refers to the use of color cloth rolled and pasted on the edges of clothing, forming an uneven expression of the pattern, making the hue more prominent.



Figure 51 The handicraft skills and patterns shown by the Yi women who embroider and the choice of colors reflect the precious material culture of the Yi people.
Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Album, Hu Xiaoping, Accessed 2022



Figure 52 A young woman's costume from the Suodi region of Liangshan, made by a non-genetic inheritor of Yi costume, Jiabazize, using both patchwork and openwork embroidery and decorated with silver clasps, is a precious material culture.
Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Museum, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.2 Color Culture in Liangshan Yi Costumes

The colors, patterns, and motifs of Liangshan Yi costumes are not just a simple form of beauty but often a combination of symbols and meanings, bearing many traces of the original religion of the Liangshan Yi people. The colors on the costumes are not only the result of the interaction between the physical properties of the colors themselves but also a typical reflection of the cultural psychology of the Liangshan Yi

people, which is one of the aesthetic and cultural characteristics of the Liangshan Yi people. The most obvious feature is the predominance of black, which is related to the traditional cultural phenomenon of the Liangshan Yi people who "revere black".

2.2.1 Mysterious Black

The Yi regard black as the "best" color in costumes. In traditional Yi costumes, men's costumes are black all over, while women's costumes are black as the basic color, with red and yellow. The combination of black, red, and yellow colors visually shows the kindness, generosity, perseverance, enthusiasm, persistence, and spontaneity of the Liangshan Yi people's personality and cultural characteristics.

In the past, in a slave society where there was a disparity between the rich and the poor, the Liangshan Yi people had strict rules on clothing in terms of material, style, and color. Embodied in the dress color of black and white hierarchical symbolism, respect for inferiority and nobility is clear, and this black and white color hierarchy concept has continued to this day.

Since ancient times, the Liangshan Yi people have had the color concept of black as being noble and honorable. The Yi people use black to represent the earth, on which they depend to exist. In addition, black retains the cultural traditions and beliefs of the Liangshan Yi, which are related to the ancestor worship, totem worship, and religious beliefs of the Yi. For example, in the legend, the ancestor of the Yi people is a black tiger. The black color is also related to its ethnic origin, as the Yi originated from the Qiang and Rong of the northwest, whose clothes were black. The Yi people respect black more than anything else, and the Bima (priests) who preside over religious activities wear black vestments, and the cattle, sheep, pigs, bowls, and other sacrificial vessels used in rituals must all be black. Moreover, the high mountains and jungles where the Yi people live are also green and dark in color, so they symbolize the earth with black, which indicates depth, vastness, and power. Since they are still black, they also like to use black as the name of the mountains and water they live in, such as along the Jinsha River, which the Yi call Black Water. At the same time, the harsh natural environment and the spirit of hard work have made the Liangshan Yi people develop a subtle and deep character, and black is also a reflection of this national spirit. In terms of physical properties, black fabric has natural characteristics such as strong heat absorption, good warmth, dirt and wear resistance, and is the color of hard work and health, so black is loved by the Yi people.

In short, black is the most basic and common color in the Liangshan Yi costume, and it is the base color of the Yi people's costume and the cultural base color of the Liangshan Yi people, which lays down the deep, simple, mysterious, and broad aesthetic style of the Liangshan Yi costume.



Figure 53 The photo was taken in 1937. The Yi noblemen, dressed in black, are honored; black is a symbol of status, and their honored national identity can be seen from their dress.

Source: <http://www.mzb.com.cn>, (February , 2023)

2.2.2 Passionate Red

In addition to black, red and yellow colors are also frequently used in Liangshan Yi costumes, architectural patterns, handicraft products, tableware, etc. It should be noted that these red and yellow colors are pure and restrained: medium yellow, orange-yellow, big red, deep red, purple-red, etc. The colors are flamboyant but never frivolous. The combination of dress colors, mainly black, red, and yellow, has become the main colors of the color culture of the Liangshan Yi people.

Red symbolizes the worship of the sun and fire among the Liangshan Yi. While the Han see red as a color of celebration and good luck, the Yi see red as a color of life and have strong emotions about it. The famous Yi epic of creation, "Le Er Te Yi," records that during the long years of living together with nature, the Yi developed a reverence and worship for the sun and learned to use fire for lighting, food processing, and heating, thus greatly improving their survival and physical condition. Together with nature, the Yi developed a reverence and worship for the sun and learned to use fire for lighting, food processing, and heating, thus greatly improving their survival and physical condition. In addition, the Torch Festival can also reflect their worship of fire. When night falls, the Yi people light up their villages and fields with torches to exterminate pests, expel evil spirits, and pray for a good harvest. The Yi people respect fire during their lifetime and use fire to bury their flesh after death. In short, the sun and fire are regarded as the sources of life and the sources on which all things

depend, making them the objects of Yi rituals. As a result, red, which represents fire and the sun as well as symbolizes bravery and enthusiasm, holds a special place in the hearts of the Yi people and has become a favorite color in Yi costumes.



Figure 54 Young women wearing Yi costumes, with red as the main color, appear to be more enthusiastic and energetic, and the color choice reflects the Yi people's worship of fire; red is the color of life for the Yi.

Source: Liangshan Daily Public, Accessed 2022

2.2.3 Bright yellow

The Chinese dynasty has always revered the color yellow, and the emperors of all dynasties were called the True Dragon Son, whose dragon robe was yellow. Everyone in the palace wears yellow to show respect, majesty, and supremacy. The Yi people of Liangshan, far away in southwest China, also like yellow, but for the Yi people, yellow is not a symbol of status; the Yi see yellow as a beautiful, bright, and precious color. In much of Yi folk literature, yellow is always described with praise and affection and is also used to represent beautiful and kind women. In addition, yellow is also the color of ripe grains such as potatoes, corn, and barley, which are the favorite foods of the Yi people, representing harvest, abundance, and joy. The fact that Yi girls in the Liangshan region like to wear yellow oilcloth umbrellas also shows their love for yellow.



Figure 55 At the 2017 Torch Festival event, Yi girls carried butter umbrellas and performed traditional Yi group songs and dances. More outside groups were made aware of the Yi color culture. This is an important place to showcase the precious Yi culture.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February, 2023)

The beauty of color in the costumes of the Liangshan Yi is mainly expressed in the matching and combination of costume colors. In short, the Liangshan Yi people have their own unique aesthetic vision of dress color, as well as the origins and accumulation of national history. The cult of black, red, and yellow has a strong cultural heritage that truly and intuitively reproduces the traditional folk culture of the Yi people and expresses their joy, anger, sorrow, life, and death. Black is deep, ancient, mysterious, and melancholy. Red represents light, warmth, and good luck and is given the passion of "blood" and "fire" and the mysterious meaning of sorcery. Yellow is beautiful, symbolizing the golden autumn and having rich, agricultural, reproductive, and other meanings. Red and yellow colors on a black background create a stark contrast between warm and cold, strength and weakness, and light and dark. This particular use of color forms the most important part of the Yi people's national identity.

As society continues to develop, the use of color in the costumes of the Liangshan Yi people has become more abundant, but no matter how the color of the costumes changes, the beautiful feelings of the Yi people to respect their ancestors and nature will not change. The color symbols show the Yi people's worship of their ancestors and the division of social hierarchy, and at the same time, they can reflect the age difference between Yi women. In short, the color symbols of Liangshan Yi costumes show the world the unique material history and culture of the Liangshan Yi people.

2.3 Patterns Culture in Liangshan Yi Costumes

In addition to the color culture of traditional Liangshan Yi costumes, patterns are also extremely widely used. These patterns show the real life environment of the Liangshan Yi people, including beautiful scenes about nature and things that are closely related to Yi life. People evolve concrete things into abstract lines and patterns, forming different patterns such as sun patterns and ram's horn patterns. Any kind of national costume symbol needs to be expressed in a specific form of material composition, and this is the case with the patterns in Yi costume patterns.

The development of the Yi costume pattern in Liangshan has gone through a long period of time and accumulated a strong historical culture. It has gradually formed a solid collective contract during its long development and evolution, and it has developed with the development of the Yi people and assumed the important responsibility of showing the characteristics of the Yi costume and the material culture of the Yi.

2.3.1 Geometric Patterns

Geometric patterns are the most numerous and popular patterns used in Liangshan Yi costumes. These patterns, which are composed of simple dots, lines, and surfaces, are actually decorative and functional patterns that are highly summarized by the subjective consciousness of the Liangshan Yi people through their observation of objective things in natural life. Some of the geometric patterns in Liangshan Yi costumes are simple, while others are more complex. The form of a single geometric pattern has obvious regularity in the form of change, for example, with thick and thin, short and long, straight and curved lines constituting a decorative lace repeatedly used, while the form of a more complex geometric pattern has unit elements that are rich, full compositions, often combined with other patterns into a new pattern as the main pattern, and different elements of the form of articulation between the close, color focus on the color of the decoration, and contrast.

The more common geometric patterns are mainly sun and moon patterns, wave patterns, swirl patterns, rainbow patterns, star patterns, etc.



Figure 56 The Figure shows the sun and moon pattern, which originated from the Yi people's worship of the sun and moon. The Yi ancestors discovered that the celestial weather could directly influence the prosperity of agriculture and the rise and fall of animal husbandry and that this influence was irresistible at that time, so they developed a respect for the sun and moon celestial bodies and also wanted to express the idea of praying for blessings and avoiding disasters, so they embodied it in the form of patterns in their costumes.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 57 The swirling pattern on the Figure is named after its shape, which resembles a whirlpool. The use of the swirling pattern reflects the fact that it had a protective meaning for Yi clothing and the Yi people at a time when life was poor and productivity was low.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.3.2 Plant Patterns

Among the patterns of Liangshan Yi costumes, plant motifs are common. These patterns are usually colorful, rich, and subtle, and when combined with exquisite craftsmanship, they express the beauty of plants and the Liangshan Yi people's admiration and love for nature to the fullest. The layout of plant motifs is visually full, with a harmonious and unified tone but with attention to detail and variation.

Among them, ferns, sunflowers, and various natural plant deformation patterns are mostly used. It is said that in ancient times, fern sprouts were a kind of wild vegetable for the Yi ancestors to eat, and fern sprouts were not only vigorous but also

could adapt to various difficult environments, so "fern sprouts" were crucial to the Yi ancestors, and the Yi people called fern grass "life-saving grass." The Yi people of Liangshan still retain the habit of consuming ferns. According to the Yi scriptures, there were tribes with the name "fern-based plants" in ancient times. Therefore, the widespread use of the fern pattern on Yi children's clothing the meaning of praying for sustenance and a blessing for the prosperity of future generations.



Figure 58 "Auspiciousness" was embroidered by "Jiabazize," a non-genetic inheritor of the Yi people in Liangshan. To express their feelings, the Yi people's gratitude for the fern-based plant is graphically reflected in their clothing. The fern-based pattern is a precious material culture of the Yi people.

Source: Jiabazize Costumes and Culture Co. Photo: Ding Xuerui 2022



Figure 59 The symbolic meaning of the sunflower pattern is similar to that of the sun and moon patterns, both of which express the worship of the Liangshan Yi people for natural celestial bodies. Solar energy gives everything the conditions for natural growth, reflecting the Yi people's desire for a good harvest and abundance.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Culture and Crafts, Su Xiaoyan, Accessed 2008

2.3.3 Animal Patterns

Animal patterns can be divided into animal, avian, and insect categories and are mostly based on species that are closely related to life. Because of their various shapes and forms, most animal motifs are rich in expressions, and the aesthetic interest of the motifs is primarily conveyed by their expressions or local features.

The Liangshan Yi people use mostly animal and poultry designs; among them, the most important ones are the sheep horn pattern, the cow horn pattern, and the chicken crown pattern, while insects are not common. The reason for the large number of cattle and sheep patterns is that the ancestors of the Yi people could not hunt and raise sheep and cattle without them, and they were a symbol of material wealth and a necessity for the continuation of life. The use of such motifs on costumes is a way for the Yi ancestors to commemorate their ancient lives and to aspire to a better and happier life. In addition, the ancestors of the Yi people also believed in and worshiped the gods, and totem worship was a manifestation of their worship of the gods. For example, the crab foot pattern, which is unique to Meigu County in the Yino region, is said to be the foot of a god called "Xiu Luowu" (actually an animal), which is said to be so powerful that it is very difficult to defeat it and requires a warrior with a sword in his left hand to succeed.

After mythologizing this animal, the Yi people believe that it has a blood relationship with their clan and regard themselves as the descendants of this mythical animal. Using these totem patterns is a psychological need to pray for shelter, and using them in costumes shows, for example, that the Yi people worship nature.



Figure 60 The Figures are "crab pattern, goat horn pattern, and cow horn pattern," which are used on Yi costumes to reflect the Yi people's worship of nature.

Patterns are an important part of Yi costume and important material culture.

Source: Liangshan Yi Costume Culture and Crafts, Su Xiaoyan, Accessed 2008

2.3.4 Artifact Patterns

The Yi people of Liangshan use objects that are closely related to their daily lives as a source of inspiration to design a series of patterns related to objects, and they are accustomed to placing the patterns of objects in a prominent position in their costumes. These themes also show that they worship nature and want to live in plenty and prosperity for many generations.

The main patterns are the fire-sickle pattern, window pattern, stone-step pattern, and Tusi seal pattern. Among them, the fire-sickle pattern is the most widely used. The Yi people are a nation that uses fire, respects fire, and protects fire, and it is often said that "Yi people are born by the fire and die on the fire," which is one of the manifestations of their worship of nature. The fire sickle is an important tool for the Yi people to get fire and is called the mother of flame, so it naturally becomes an indispensable item for the Yi people. The use of the fire-sickle pattern is often repeated, which visually gives the impression of a blazing fire and is a good way to convey the symbolic meaning of prosperity and flourishing.



Figure 61 The Yi fire sickle pattern consists of fire and a sickle, signifying fire and harvest, and symbolizing the hard work, bravery, and abundant life of the Yi people. On occasions such as traditional weddings and festivals, people wear traditional Yi costumes, in which the fire and sickle pattern often appear to express their identity and cultural heritage.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 62 The Yi window pattern is an expression of the Yi people's desire for a comfortable life, as not all Yi houses have windows in a difficult production environment, so the window pattern has become a symbol of affluence for the Yi people. It is now often used in Yi costumes to express the good wishes of the Yi people.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 63 The Figure shows the "Tusi seal pattern," which is a manifestation of the Yi people's power and a special pattern on the costumes of the privileged few. In the slavery period of Liangshan, this pattern was a symbol of obvious superiority and inferiority.

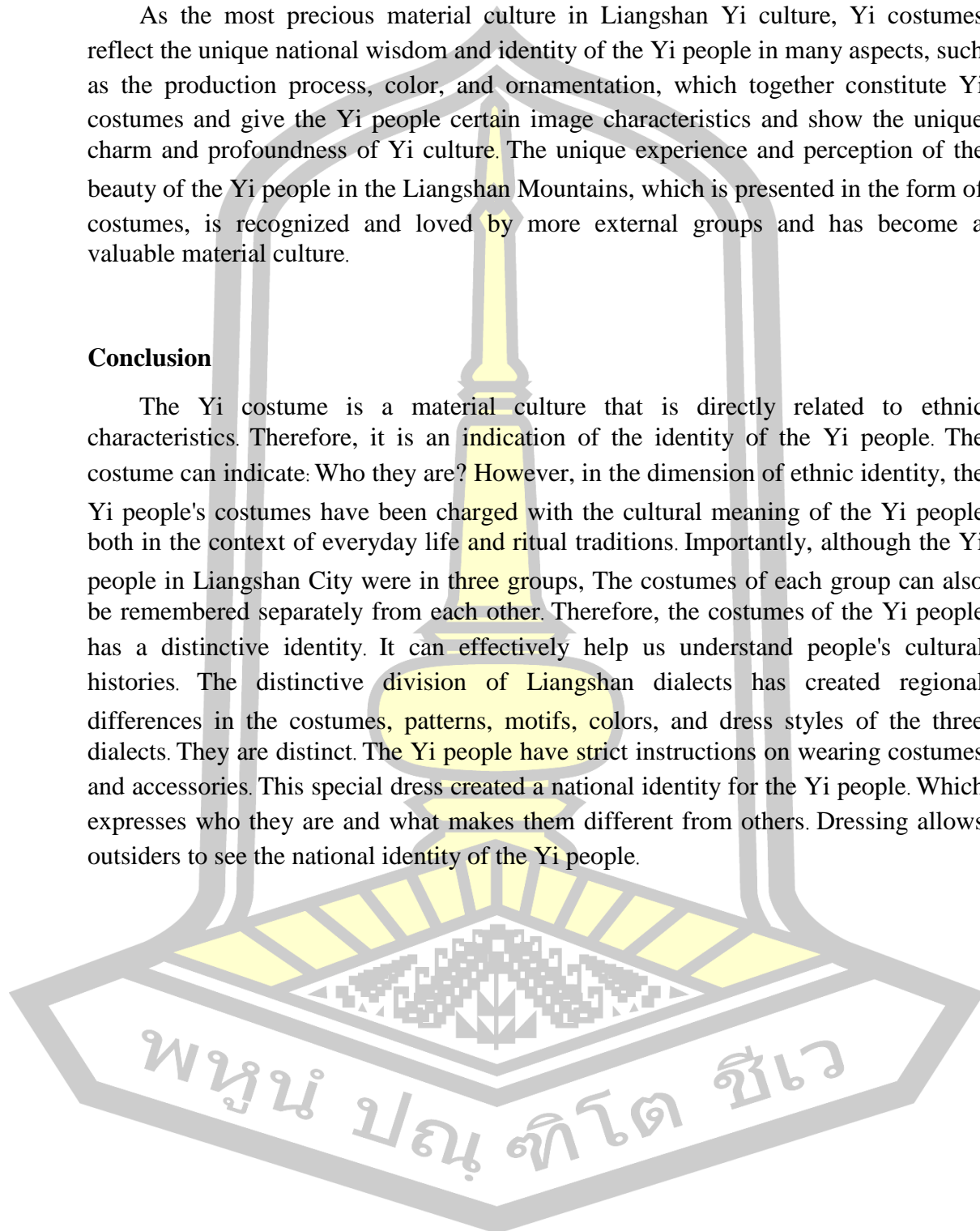
Source: Culture and Craft of Liangshan Yi Costume, Su Xiaoyan, Accessed 2008

Liangshan Yi costume patterns, which combine various patterns with different connotations according to different rules, eventually form a strong visual art. Through studying the types and composition of patterns in Liangshan Yi costumes, it can be seen that these patterns not only reflect the worship of nature by the Liangshan Yi people but also show the aesthetic awareness of the Yi people, which demonstrates the harmonious and unified beauty of nature.

As the most precious material culture in Liangshan Yi culture, Yi costumes reflect the unique national wisdom and identity of the Yi people in many aspects, such as the production process, color, and ornamentation, which together constitute Yi costumes and give the Yi people certain image characteristics and show the unique charm and profoundness of Yi culture. The unique experience and perception of the beauty of the Yi people in the Liangshan Mountains, which is presented in the form of costumes, is recognized and loved by more external groups and has become a valuable material culture.

Conclusion

The Yi costume is a material culture that is directly related to ethnic characteristics. Therefore, it is an indication of the identity of the Yi people. The costume can indicate: Who they are? However, in the dimension of ethnic identity, the Yi people's costumes have been charged with the cultural meaning of the Yi people both in the context of everyday life and ritual traditions. Importantly, although the Yi people in Liangshan City were in three groups, The costumes of each group can also be remembered separately from each other. Therefore, the costumes of the Yi people has a distinctive identity. It can effectively help us understand people's cultural histories. The distinctive division of Liangshan dialects has created regional differences in the costumes, patterns, motifs, colors, and dress styles of the three dialects. They are distinct. The Yi people have strict instructions on wearing costumes and accessories. This special dress created a national identity for the Yi people. Which expresses who they are and what makes them different from others. Dressing allows outsiders to see the national identity of the Yi people.

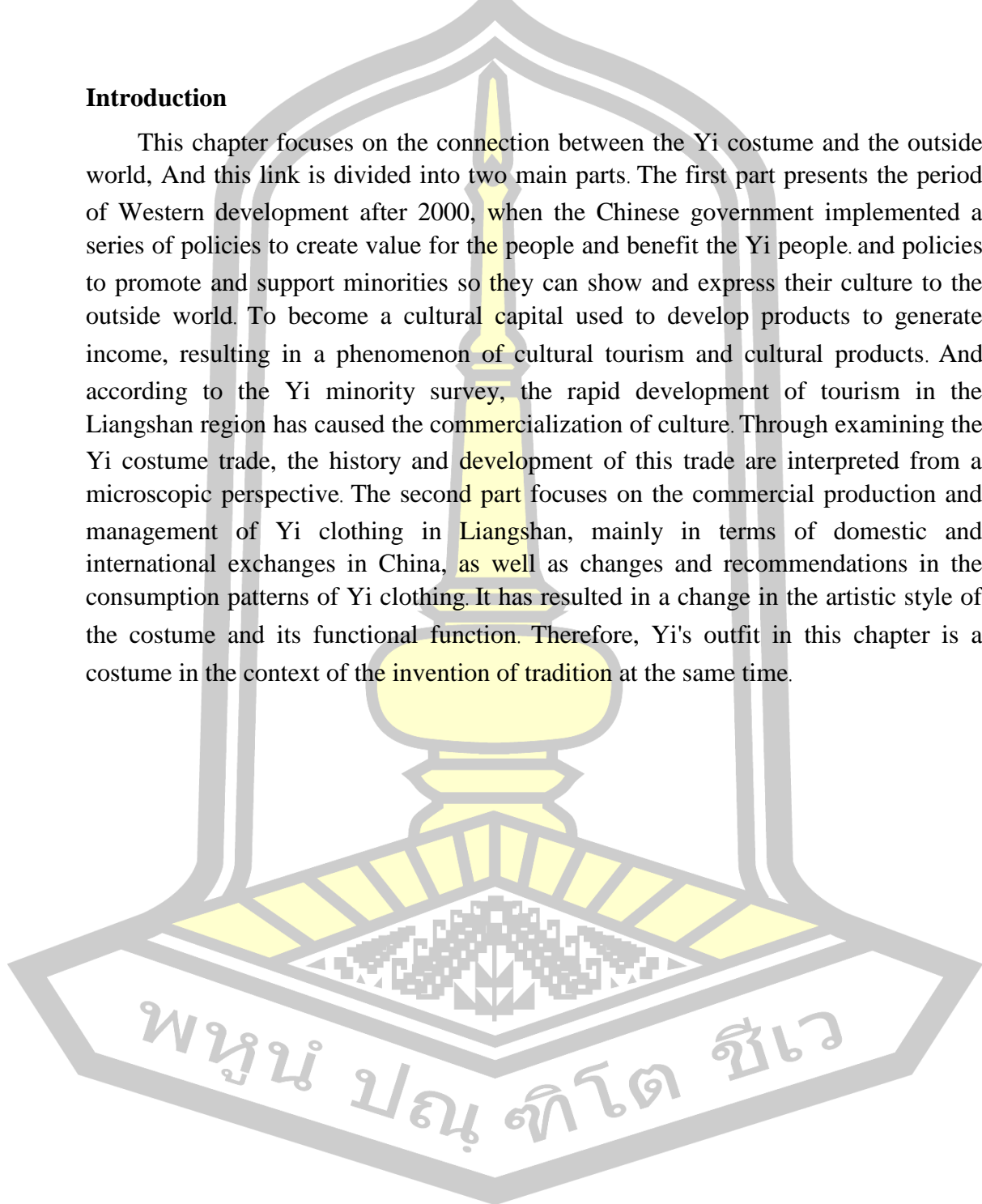


CHAPTER IV

Yi's Costume in the Dimension of Commoditization

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the connection between the Yi costume and the outside world, And this link is divided into two main parts. The first part presents the period of Western development after 2000, when the Chinese government implemented a series of policies to create value for the people and benefit the Yi people. and policies to promote and support minorities so they can show and express their culture to the outside world. To become a cultural capital used to develop products to generate income, resulting in a phenomenon of cultural tourism and cultural products. And according to the Yi minority survey, the rapid development of tourism in the Liangshan region has caused the commercialization of culture. Through examining the Yi costume trade, the history and development of this trade are interpreted from a microscopic perspective. The second part focuses on the commercial production and management of Yi clothing in Liangshan, mainly in terms of domestic and international exchanges in China, as well as changes and recommendations in the consumption patterns of Yi clothing. It has resulted in a change in the artistic style of the costume and its functional function. Therefore, Yi's outfit in this chapter is a costume in the context of the invention of tradition at the same time.



Part 1: Background of the Commercialization of Yi Costumes

As a kind of cultural commodity, the costume of each nationality contains its own arts and crafts, value tendencies, aesthetic interest, production technology, and other cultural factors. Costume culture is inextricably related to the commodity economy, which influences or restricts the development direction of costume culture to a great extent by influencing people's concepts and behaviors, making costume culture present special commercialization characteristics under the influence of the environment.

With the accelerated pace of China's modernization, the emerging commodity economy and modern communication media have violently invaded every inch of the country's soil, and Liangshan, a region that has retained its traditional social form, is facing the current situation of disintegration and disappearance under the impact of a strong civilization. The division of labor, the commodity economy, the communication media, and the rise of the working tide have caused many people to detach from their original social identity attributes, and some of the best craftsmen have begun to make a living by doing their crafts full-time, while more people have become consumers. Costume production is no longer a product of collective standardization but is developing in the direction of personalization and diversification. On the one hand, the market has made it easier for traditional dress ideas to change, which is good for the economy and society. On the other hand, it has also made traditional dress cultures face new problems.

The development of Liangshan Yi costumes can be roughly divided into four stages according to time: first, the early documented Yi costumes; second, the fusion costumes with Han and other minority costumes during the Ming and Qing dynasties; third, the improved national costumes that emerged after the founding of New China; and fourth, the innovative development of national costumes after 2000. The background of the historical development of the commercialization of Liangshan Yi costumes can be traced back to the 1980s.

In the 1980s, China implemented reform and opened up, and the economies of various regions began to develop gradually. At the same time, tourism began to rise, and more and more people began to pay attention to ethnic cultures and traditional costumes. This provided an opportunity for the commercialization of Yi costumes. In this context, a number of Yi costume enterprises with scale and production technology began to appear. These enterprises use modern production processes and management models to produce Yi costumes that not only retain traditional handicraft techniques and cultural connotations but also have better market competitiveness. Through brand building and product innovation, these enterprises have laid the foundation for the commercialization of Yi costumes.

In the past, the Liangshan Yi people lived in alpine regions, and their clothing focused on the function of keeping warm and cold, with a single style, mainly pleated skirts, Chaerwa, long shirts, and pants, etc. Since 2000, Liangshan Yi people's clothing has diversified with different living environments, production, work, and leisure. Before the Qing Dynasty, the structure of clothing was a wide, whole-piece cut, but in modern times, influenced by Western and Chinese clothing, western cuts that accentuate the body's curves were adopted, and around 2015, a retro wind swept in and whole-piece cuts regained popularity. Yi stage performance wear and Yi cultural T-shirts are the earlier styles. (Liu Xingtao,2020)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Yi people still conserved the traditional, purely manual processes of self-production, such as weaving, dyeing, and sewing. Such laborious production has been gradually replaced by modern sewing machines combined with handwork. In recent years, with the development of social productivity, science and education, and the commodity economy, more and more stores are processing and making Yi clothing, and there are also ethnic clothing production and processing enterprises of different scales. In addition to traditional hand embroidery, computerized plate making, computerized embroidery, printing, and even assembly line production are also used in the production process. These advanced production processes have brought convenience to Liangshan Yi clothing by simplifying the process of clothing production, shortening production time, and reducing production costs. Nowadays, the Yi costumes not only meet people's needs for beauty and practicality, but also highlight the personality and culture of the wearer, which greatly enriches the styles of Yi costumes and, to a certain extent, promotes the commercialization of Yi costumes.

Since 2000, the Chinese government has been implementing the Western Development Strategy. Driven by a series of government policies and measures to enrich the people and benefit the farmers, the economy of Liangshan Prefecture has continued to grow rapidly, and the income of urban and rural residents has increased steadily, resulting in the diversification of Liangshan Yi costumes and the acceleration of commercialization, fashion, and industrialization. This remote region of Liangshan, like other ethnic regions, is experiencing unprecedented modernization and development, which is also reflected in the details of people's daily dress. In a modern, economy-oriented society, in order to protect and inherit the Yi costume culture, we must develop the economy, support the Yi costume industry, expand cultural exchanges with foreign costumes, develop Yi costume cultural resources, transform cultural art into cultural commodities, and eventually become costume cultural capital to achieve sustainable development.

1.1 Institutional Change and thought emancipation

In the 1950s, the three social systems of slavery, serfdom, and feudalism coexisted in Liangshan, and although slavery was the dominant system, there was no unified slave-owning regime, and the natural environment, production, and living conditions varied greatly from place to place. In 1956, when the Party and the government carried out democratic reforms in Liangshan, slavery was abolished and Liangshan entered a new stage of socialism, and the hierarchy of Liangshan Yi costumes gradually disappeared in the ideological liberation of "equality for all." Faced with the strong impact of modern costumes and foreign cultures, people began to pursue more diversified lifestyles, which accelerated the commercialization and diversification of Liangshan Yi costumes.

1.2 Rapid development of transportation

Historically, Liangshan was a traffic-closed area, with people living in villages with rugged terrain and high altitude, making travel very difficult. But in 2012, Liangshan got a real highway out of the state, the new airport was officially put into use, and the total mileage of roads in Liangshan Prefecture exceeded 29,000 kilometers in 2022, making the region basically realize the goal of all townships having all-access roads. In December 2022, the operation of dynamic trains in the Liangshan region announced that Liangshan Prefecture had officially stepped into the era of dynamic trains. The traditional production and processing mode of self-produced and self-sold Liangshan Yi costumes has been broken with the construction of a modern three-dimensional transportation network, and the diversified sales channels have made the current Liangshan Yi costumes not only meet their own needs but also be understood and loved by more and more groups, and their commercialization has become a reality. The development of commercialization has become a trend.

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Figure 64 At the end of 2022, Liangshan Prefecture officially entered the era of moving trains, and the construction of a modern three-dimensional transportation network has broadened the sales channels of Yi costumes.

Source: <https://www.baidu.com.cn> (February, 2023)

1.3 Education enhancement

With the popularization of compulsory education and the continuous improvement of education levels in China, the education level of the Liangshan Yi people is getting higher and higher. Currently, in both urban and rural areas, most of the youths of the Liangshan Yi people receive school education based on Han culture, and more and more Yi youths are entering professional colleges and universities for professional studies. Using contemporary design concepts, traditional Yi elements are incorporated into modern designs, and new styles and patterns are innovated. We strive to be closer to the current life, work, and leisure of consumers in the selection of fabrics, colors, and patterns, emphasize brand awareness, use modern enterprise management and sales models to maximize economic benefits, and greatly promote the commercialization of Yi costumes market development, making Yi costumes more specialized and modernized.

1.4 Productivity improvement

Clothing was created first to meet the needs of people's lives and production, i.e., applicability, and secondly, symbolic meaning and cultural connotation. Before 1949, the Yi people in Liangshan did not produce cotton but hemp, so they used hemp and wool to make clothes. With the deepening of reform and opening up in Liangshan, the speeding up of urbanization, and the rise of the wave of working in Liangshan, many Yi people have moved from the alpine mountains to the periphery of cities and towns and along the traffic routes, and the changes in ecological environment and lifestyle have led to changes in the production methods, aesthetic awareness, and consumption concepts of Yi people.

New costume production and processing machines have come into being, greatly enhancing the efficiency of costume production. Liangshan Yi costumes have changed on the basis of tradition to meet the current production and consumption needs of the people of Liangshan Yi and to meet the pursuit of fashion and personalized aesthetic needs of the Yi youth. The fabrics of Yi costumes have diversified and are no longer limited to cotton, hemp, and wool; instead, silk, velvet, chemical fibers, and blended fabrics, which are more popular among the general public, have become the common fabrics used in Yi costume production. Yi costumes have become more popular in the market in part because of the rise in productivity and the use of new fabrics.

1.5 Change in social style and different wearing the Costume style

With the development of the Liangshan economy, the tide of commercialization has brought about industrialized mechanical processing and assembly line production methods, putting traditional handcrafted production methods at a disadvantage, and many craftsmen have abandoned traditional production. Nowadays, the rapid emergence and development of modern communication and network media have facilitated the interaction between Liangshan and the outside world, and the contact and dialogue between different cultural forms have become more frequent and intermingled more closely. In the face of the diverse costumes of the mainstream media, the traditional "red, yellow and black" ethnic costumes seem monotonous and cannot meet the needs of young people for individualized colors, and the traditional Yi costumes are laborious and time-consuming to make, so many Yi people prefer modern products. To meet this demand modern Yi clothing has changed during the process of commercialization.

1.6 Lucrative economic benefits

With the emergence of industrialized Yi clothing production, Yi clothing has also begun to penetrate the commodity market field, and some Yi people will buy Yi clothing instead of making it themselves so they can meet their own clothing needs. This means that selling Yi clothing on the market gives the people who make it a fairly stable source of income. Many Yi people in the Liangshan region, for example, have simply given up their meager income from agricultural production to specialize in Yi costume making. As evidenced by the many costume festivals held in the Liangshan region, the costume industry has led to the development of local tourism, catering, retailing, transportation, and other related industries, thus bringing more economic income to people employed in various industries and invariably building a community of regional economic forms and generating increasingly obvious economic benefits. In recent years, some Yi-themed public service places, such as hotels and restaurants, have been decorated with Yi costume elements and even designed with these elements as the basis for a variety of small goods, etc. In this way,

the economic value of Yi costumes has become even more evident. Nowadays, the Yi costume has become a special industry on the road to the economic and cultural development of the Yi people and is also the most valuable cultural resource in the Liangshan region, which is creating a constant economic value.

1.7 The government Policy Supporting

Under the promotion of national and provincial NRM protection, in November 2014, Yi costumes were approved to be included in the fourth batch of the national NRM list and protected and inherited as traditional handicraft NRM items. In Liangshan Prefecture, two "provincial-level demonstration bases for the production and protection of ICH related to Yi costumes" have been established: the Yi Costume Production Demonstration Base (Jia Jia Yi Traditional Costume Production Co., Ltd.) and the Sichuan Yi Costume (Aosuobudi Costume Production Demonstration Base). With the help of non-heritage protection work, Yi costumes have become an important way to remember the Yi people's great traditional culture and to spread Yi culture.

The local government of Liangshan Prefecture has also organized many folk associations for Yi costumes and developed the Yi costume industry from the perspective of saving the national culture and protecting the national cultural heritage. The People's Government of Liangshan Prefecture has formulated the Plan for the Development of Yi Costume Industry in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture from 2015-2020 and the Opinions on the Implementation of the Development of Yi Costume Industry in Liangshan Prefecture, which are of great practical significance to fully excavate, inherit, innovate, and stimulate the culture of Yi costume, enhance the cultural soft power of Liangshan, promote the integrated development of cultural tourism, and promote economic development, livelihood improvement, and social stability in poor minority areas and remote mountainous areas. It is of great practical significance.

With the high attention and active efforts of governments and organizations at all levels, Liangshan Yi costumes have made good development achievements. In order to promote cultural industry to alleviate poverty and revitalize costume craftsmanship in poor areas, traditional skills are introduced into industrial chain development in order to preserve the national costume culture and thus inherit and develop Yi costumes. To this end, Liangshan Prefecture has given full play to the industrial advantages of Yi costumes as a non-heritage item and opened Yi costume skills poverty alleviation and employment workshops in Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, and other places, promoting the formation of a larger industrial scale on the basis of the previous ones and driving more Yi people to employment and prosperity.

Since 2014, the government of Liangshan Prefecture has invested millions of dollars each year to carry out basic training in Yi costume craftsmanship, including the inclusion of Yi costume craftsmanship training in the top ten livelihood projects of Liangshan Prefecture and the initial establishment of a certain scale of Liangshan Yi costume production and a production team, which has laid a solid foundation for promoting the inheritance and development of Liangshan Yi costume.

Through continuous development, the ancient and fascinating Yi costume culture has been given a new lease on life. The "Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshops for Poverty Alleviation" have been set up in various regions of Liangshan Prefecture, and excellent costume skill inheritors and development leaders have emerged, such as A Xi Wuzhimo, Aniu Aga, and Jabazize. Up until now, there have been more than 20 Yi costume and embroidery associations in Liangshan. The Yi costume industry has been produced in 17 counties and cities throughout the state, and a Yi costume park and 10 costume and embroidery industry bases have been initially established. More than 10 counties and cities in the state have held more than 100 Yi costumes and Yi embroidery training courses, with a total of tens of thousands of people trained, and a "China Yi Embroidery Garment Exhibition Hall" of more than 2,000 square meters has been built, which has eventually enabled the total annual sales volume of the Yi costumes industry in the state to exceed hundreds of millions of dollars and has strongly driven more than 200,000 women in nearly 10,000 villages in the state to achieve flexible employment and escape from home. The average annual income of women in the industry has increased from 1,000-15,000 yuan to 12,000-50,000 yuan, and more than 20,000 families have realized employment and income and embarked on a new path to get rid of poverty and become rich by focusing on building the Yi costumes industry to drive other industries, with an added value of 278 million yuan. In addition, by creating related costumes and embroidery brands and cooperating with the famous Chinese Internet company "Vipshop," we have laid the foundation for the continuous promotion of Yi costume heritage and its industrialization and explored a practical development path. (Li Ming, 2021)

With the development of socialist commodity economies, the process of commercializing Yi costumes has accelerated, thus changing the functional meaning of Yi costumes, etc. Originally, Yi costumes were only worn and used by insiders, but in the process of commercialization, in order to sell to external groups, people all over the world started to wear Yi costumes, which reflects a kind of traditional re-invention. While preserving the traditional cultural connotations and values of Yi costumes, innovations and changes are made to make them more adaptable to the needs and development trends of contemporary society, enhancing the organic connection between Yi costumes and modern society, and realizing the vitality and development of the traditional culture of Yi costumes through the combination of

inheritance and innovation. Under the current new situation, the development prospect of the Yi costume commodity market is very promising.

Part 2: Commercial production and management of Yi costumes

2.1 China

The consumer group for Yi costumes was initially local residents only, and the previous standard of living was not high enough for demand to be high. Traditional Yi costumes were usually made by themselves, and the market demand was very small. However, with the globalization of tourism, more and more tourists are flocking to ethnic minority regions in search of unique tourism experiences. Ethnic tourism is developed on the basis of rich existing cultural resources, and its development and reproduction require little investment; it is a new cultural economic form with low consumption and high efficiency. Because of this, many ethnic regions have developed ethnic tourism as a way to show off their rich and colorful culture and customs. This has led to the buying and selling of cultural resources as tourism products on the tourism market.

The commercialization of Yi costumes is a typical example, thus, tourists have become the main consumers of Yi costumes, both at home and abroad, followed by artists and individual enthusiasts. The main motives for tourists to purchase ethnic cultural tourism products include commemoration, collection, gifting, display, curiosity, and aesthetics. Through the purchase of tourism products, people can recall the time of the tour, different landscapes, and people they met during the tour; they can recall their original life state; and they can recall the gains and touches of the tourism experience on them.

In recent years, Liangshan Prefecture has been fully implementing the development strategy of "Territorial Tourism" and accelerating the integration of tourism and industries, including traditional handicrafts. Yi costumes have contributed to the growth of cultural vitality by making the area more appealing to tourists.

First, we promote Yi costumes through local festivals such as "Torch Festival" and "Year of Yi" as well as foreign cultural exchange activities, create a number of excellent musical, film, and television works to showcase Yi costumes, and greatly enhance the popularity and reputation of Yi costume products. stimulate market vitality. Secondly, Liangshan Prefecture is doing its best to develop the Yi costume industry. With the expansion of Yi costumes from the traditional local consumer market to the tourism craft market and the transformation from traditional daily necessities to cultural and creative products and tourism souvenirs, the sales market for Yi costumes is continuously expanding. Yi costumes have not only become

essential items for important festivals such as the Yi New Year and Torch Festival but have also been exported to Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and other areas where Yi people are concentrated. At present, there are more than 600 Yi costume stores of all sizes in all counties and towns in Liangshan Prefecture, and famous enterprises such as Jiajia Costumes, Guyi Yi Embroidery, and Zhaojue Costume Factory have emerged. Thirdly, in order to showcase the unique craftsmanship of Yi costumes in an all-round way and focus on building the Yi costume industry, Liangshan Prefecture has planned a "Daliangshan Ethnic Culture Creative Industrial Park" in the urban area of Xichang City with a layout of 10,000 square meters based on traditional folk culture, creating a famous Yi costume business park that will drive Xichang and even the entire Yi costume industry. This will drive the development of Yi costumes and other industries in Xichang and throughout Liangshan.

Therefore, in such a social and cultural context, with the support of the national government, entrepreneurs studying the design, manufacture, and operation of Yi costumes are emerging, some folk artists mastering precious Yi costume skills are emerging, and Yi people are responding to the preservation and inheritance of Yi costume culture with their precious folk skills and contributing to the development of the national commodity industry. Through the preliminary field survey, the author has a general understanding of the current commercial production and management of Yi costumes, the state of industrial operation, the survival and income of Yi costume craftsmen and sellers, the inheritance of skills, etc. This section goes into more detail about how local yi costumes are made and sold on the market, using three typical examples.

2.1.1 Practitioner of Tradition and Modernity-A Xi Wuzhimo

Axi Wuzhimo is the first master of Yi embroidery crafts in Sichuan Province. In 2008, she was chosen as a county-level non-genetic inheritor of Yi traditional embroidery, and in 2012, she was chosen as a provincial-level non-genetic inheritor of Yi costumes.

Born into a Yi family in Liangshan Prefecture, she was born into a family of hard-working Yi girls, and she was no exception. Gradually, Yi's costumes became her whole life. In order to make a living, after the Spring Festival in 1993, A Xi Wuzhimo went out of town and set up a stall in the county, selling not only candy and other items but also needlework and cloth out of habit. Unlike other costume stores, the Yi ethnic costume store is not just a simple matter of opening a storefront and selling goods; the exquisite Yi costume requires a high level of embroidery skills, stitch by stitch. In 1993, when she was just 30 years old, she opened her Yi costume store, becoming the first person in the Yinuo area to bring Yi costumes to the market. After the store opened, she didn't stay idle, learning and researching, teaching and

instructing, while selling and operating to receive orders. With her efforts, the costume store became better and better and became a famous Yi costume store near and far.

Nowadays, there are two stores in Axi Wuzhimo, one for making costume peripherals and the other for selling Yi handicrafts. In one corner of the costume store, there are piles of finished embroidery pieces, which are cut from various parts of the costumes, including sleeves and collars, in addition to a large pile of embroidery pieces for making hats and bags. All these embroidery pieces are made by hand, stitch by stitch, and are usually contracted out to skilled embroiderers in the surrounding area, so they are much more expensive. The clothes in the store are carefully divided from cutting to embroidery and stitching and are sold after they are finished. There are also many types of decorative patterns stacked in another store that are produced by machines. Nowadays, there are many traditional costumes on the market all over Liangshan that are produced by machines to replace the original hand-embroidered parts.

The Yi costumes in Axi Wuzhimo's costumes store not only follow the characteristics of traditional Yi costumes but also add new elements according to her understanding and customers' requirements, adding green and blue colors on top of red, yellow, and black. The market is gradually opening up and is loved by many consumers. Because of her exquisite skills, Axi Wuzhimo began to receive various awards frequently. In November 2019, in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, at the opening of the National New Farmers' New Technology Entrepreneurship and Innovation Expo, she was the representative of the first Yi costume cooperative in Sichuan Province, established under the guidance of the Liangshan Prefecture Women's Federation, and presented Yi costumes with distinctive and infectious regional characteristics, which were highly recognized by guests and audiences at home and abroad. They felt the charm of the times of Yi costume culture and the diversity of Liangshan culture and art. When Samuel Varas, Director of the Information Technology Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, came to inspect the expo site, he praised the Yi costumes made by her and made a collection.

Not content with her own achievements, Axi Wuzhimo took the first Yi embroidery training course organized by the local women's federation in 2008 and took her embroidery skills to the next level. After the course, she went from student to teacher, teaching a wide range of dressmaking skills and innovative techniques. As many people came and went from the store, she came into contact with many women left behind in the countryside, and A Xi Wuzhimo was well aware of their plight, many of whom had to work outside the home to make ends meet. Between 2016 and 2019, Axi Wuzhimo has driven more than 1,700 Yi people to use Yi costumes to generate more than 25 million yuan in three years, and now there are many Yi costume stores in the Liangshan region. Over the past 20 years, she has trained 3,209

people and held 45 special training sessions on Yi costumes. Since then, her company, Heimaka Culture and Tourism Co., Ltd., has become a modern company integrating research and design, production, and sales. More affordable and exquisite Yi costume products have come to the market, and embroiderers and partners have gained a more stable economic income. At the same time, more people are involved in the inheritance and protection of Yi traditional culture.(A Xi Wuzhimo.2023:interview)

She hopes to build a training school specializing in Yi costume in the future to spread the knowledge and skills of Yi costume and let more people understand Yi culture. Yi costumes have changed the trajectory of Axi Wuzhimo's life, and she has changed the trajectory of many Yi women's lives. Because of this, more Yi people have been able to feel proud of their culture and make money from it, giving the Yi costume industry a new lease on life.

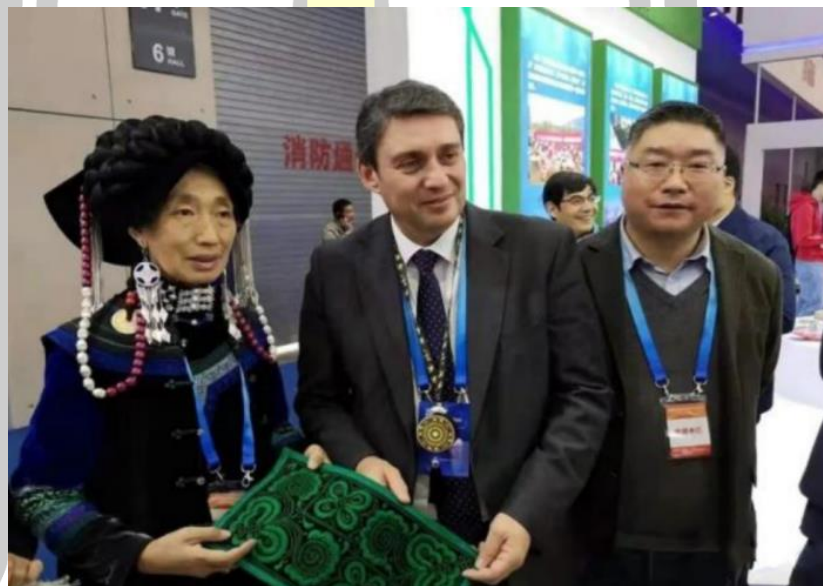


Figure 65 Axi Wuzhimo (left) shows her Yi costume embroidery work to Samuel Varas (right), Director of the Information Technology Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, at the National Entrepreneurship Fair, making more people aware of Yi costume culture and reflecting the commercialization value of Yi costumes.

Source: <https://www.thepaper.cn>(February , 2023)



Figure 66 Axi Wuzhimo teaches more Yi embroiderers the art of Yi dress making and how to turn Yi dress products into Commercialization value.

Source: <https://www.thepaper.cn>(February , 2023)



Figure 67 Employees at the Axi Wuzhimo costumes store use machines to make Yi costumes, which has substantially improved the production efficiency of Yi costumes, and the overall price is lower than that of purely handmade ones, which is loved by many consumers.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 68 The traditional women's clothing in the Yinuo region of Liangshan, sewn by hand by Axi Wuzhimo, is mainly made of orange silk fabric, with auspicious patterns such as flowers, birds and plants engraved on the clothing, with overall fine workmanship and bright colors, taking time and costing more, and the clothing is expensive and has a certain commercialization value.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.1.2 The Designer of Yi Costumes--Jiaba Zize

Jia Bazize is a well-known Yi costume designer in China, a native of Liangshan Prefecture, and the representative inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage of Yi costume. She is also the general manager of Xichang Jia Jia Yi Traditional Costume Production Co., the head of the Sichuan Yi Costume Productive Protection Demonstration Base, and the president of the Liangshan Costume Culture Research Association.

Jaba Zize's mother was a well-known Yi dress maker in the area, and her love for Yi dress and talent for it grew out of her mother's influence. As she grew up, she became famous for her Yi dressmaking skills. She followed her mother's path, got married, and had children, but a sudden change in her life changed the course of her life.

In 1991, when she was 26 years old, her husband died suddenly due to illness, leaving her and her two young sons behind. She took her two sons to Jinyang County in the Yinuo region of Liangshan Prefecture and rented a small single room of seven or eight square meters to support her mother and three sons by making Yi costumes with her own hands. In 1997, Jia was invited to Xichang as a folk master to make costumes for the Torch Festival's large-scale singing and dancing party, "Colorful

Liangshan," which was recognized by all parties, and since then she has decided to stay in Xichang. At the beginning of her career, Jiaba Zize had to pay for her two sons' elementary school education and often had to live on debt. At the most difficult time, mother and son could only eat fresh water noodles, but a set of well-crafted Yi costumes, from the start of the needle to completion, often takes months or even years. JiabaZizi takes the scenes that can be found everywhere in life, distills them, exaggerates them, and flexibly uses cross-stitch, cross-stitch, and flat embroidery to create beautiful and detailed patterns on the collar, lapels, and cuffs. In 2005 and 2012, she established Jia Jia Yi Costume Factory and Liangshan Jia Jia Yi Traditional Costume Production Co. In addition to the development in Liangshan, the company also has more than ten wholesale agents and sellers in Yunnan and Guizhou, etc. The annual output value in 2013 was more than 1.6 million yuan, with a net income of 200,000 yuan. JiaBa Zize, on the other hand, has defied the hardships, and his efforts, step by step and on the ground, have finally brought about the fruit of successful entrepreneurship.

Since the opening of the Yi traditional dress processing workshop, JiabaZize has been dedicated to teaching Yi dress-making techniques. She has taken it upon herself to learn, make, inherit, and spread Yi costumes. Her apprentices come from all over the country, totaling more than 210, and as her company grows, Jia wants to help more Yi women find employment at home. In November 2014, a training ceremony was held in Xichang for 22 Yi women to receive professional training in Yi costume embroidery, composition, and tailoring. Over the years, with the help of the government, the training courses have been uninterrupted, with 100 to 200 people trained in the design and production of Yi costumes every year. Led by Jiabazize, other inheritors have started to follow suit, helping more Yi women use their own hands for employment. In the course, students not only exchange ideas and improve their craft, but she also encourages them to be bold and innovative.

When you walk into Jiabazize's costume store, you will find a variety of colors and styles of costumes, most of which are made of chemical fiber and blended textiles that are light, drape well, and feel smooth to the touch. The store has two rooms, inside and outside: the inner room houses the costumes, which are made through hand embroidery and machine sewing; the outer room, on the one hand, is used for daily operations and communication; on the other hand, it also displays parts of the finished garments and semi-finished products. In the outer room, compared with the inner room, the use of hand embroidery is significantly reduced, and woven decorative patterns are used in large quantities. According to Jiaba Size, the demand for costumes across Liangshan was small in the past, when the standard of living was low and traditional costumes were usually made in a self-made production environment with little market. Now, more and more people know and love Yi costumes, and in a few years' time, Jia's company has developed into a comprehensive costume company that

integrates design, customization, retail, wholesale, and rental. In addition, Jia, who has never studied design in a professional school, is also an excellent fashion designer, showing a strong sense of personal aesthetics in the style structure, fabric texture, and pattern selection, as evidenced by the wall of accolades in the store. In addition, JiabaZize is an avid collector of modern Yi traditional costumes, including traditional lifestyle costumes and wedding dresses for special occasions. As a non-genetic inheritor of Yi traditional costumes and the head of the demonstration base for the productive protection of Yi traditional costumes, JiabaZize is a competent person who respects tradition and gives new life to traditional costumes through innovation.(JiabaZize. 2023: interview)



Figure 69 Jiabazize's Jajia Yi Traditional Dress Production Co. It is a demonstration base for Yi women's entrepreneurship in Liangshan Prefecture, where regular Yi costume skills training courses are held every year to make the commercial production of Yi costumes more systematic and professional.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022





Figure 70 Jiabazize's students come to her training base to learn from her, not only in China but from people around the world who are interested in Yi costumes, which gives greater prospects for the commercialization of Yi costumes.

Source: http://www.newssc.org/test_cy.html (February , 2023)



Figure 71 The display hall of the Yi Clothing Company in Jiabazize brings together Yi clothing from the three major regions of Liangshan Prefecture, and customers can pick and choose according to their needs, both handmade and machine-made. The handmade ones are more expensive than the machine-made ones, but they are more homogeneous in terms of style, which satisfies customers' needs for personalization to a certain extent.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.1.3 Professional Costumes production factory - Yi Costumes factory

The Yi clothing factory in the Yinuo region of Liangshan was established under the management of the Liangshan Prefecture government. It has four workshops and two factories, which are fully equipped with regular production workers and embroiderers. As a specialized clothing production facility, it is a highly streamlined production model where clothing is strictly designed, patterned, cut, embroidered, and machine-sewn, with special workers in charge of each production step. In this apparel factory, even a small plate buckle has to go through many processes, from cutting to processing to production, which are all done by professional workers who repeat the same work every day. There are many machine-made decorative patterns stored in the Yi costume factory, but they are all purchased from overseas. There are three types of decorative patterns: traditional, improved traditional, and innovative patterns. The factory also contracts out a lot of work when it is necessary to make a lot of Yi costumes in a hurry.

In addition to the above-mentioned typical cases, each county in the Liangshan region generally has a few influential local clothing stores or workshops of various sizes, all of which are integrated with production, design, and sales, occupying about half of the market share in the Liangshan region. In areas below the township level, the sales are not very large due to the limited local consumption level and are usually in the state of self-production and self-sales. In addition, during the field survey, I also learned that there are few hand-made clothes nowadays, and the traditional clothes for young people are almost always bought and worn only during New Year's holidays or large ceremonies. In contrast to the situation of young people, middle-aged and elderly people prefer to wear traditional costumes in their daily lives and for ceremonial events, and almost all women can embroider and mend. This shows that the traditional costumes of the Liangshan Yi people are facing a huge heritage crisis under commercialization, and the situation is not very optimistic.

With the rapid development of the economy, mechanized production of Liangshan Yi costumes under industrialization is the trend, and when the volume of orders is increasing, contracting out the work classification has become the norm. Since it is a material processing and piecework charging method, it is too much in pursuit of speed, quantity, and economic efficiency, resulting in poor quality and mechanical reproduction of embroidery patterns, which lack the space for individual creation and imagination.

For consumers, commoditization offers more opportunities for choice. In the past, they may have had only one set of clothes a year due to the high cost of materials and time, but now that the cost has been reduced, consumers can buy several or even dozens of sets of clothing depending on their preferences. Furthermore, as the social environment and personal social identity attributes change, locals can go out to

work and study, exposing themselves to new ideas and education. Many Yi people's aesthetic feelings and values also show obvious differences from those of the older generation, and they will consciously choose and order clothes according to their aesthetic preferences when buying clothes, and Yi clothing sellers have made some changes to Yi clothing in order to broaden the consumer base. changes, which reflect a kind of traditional reinvention. In the definition of the term "traditional reinvention," it refers to the improvement and innovation based on traditional culture, skills, or products through modern technology, materials, design, and other means to make them more in line with contemporary needs and aesthetics. This process of reinvention has the significance of inheriting traditional culture as well as promoting cultural heritage and development.

For Yi costumes, tradition refers to the fact that Yi costumes were originally worn by insiders only and were a material culture. Yi people wore Yi costumes on different occasions, and through Yi costumes, Yi people established their national identity so that external groups could clearly know that this is the Yi group through their costumes, so this is a tradition for Yi people. Reinvention means that in the process of commercialization, in order to sell Yi costumes to outsiders, the function, production method, and meaning of Yi costumes changed. For example, the production method of Yi costumes was originally purely hand-sewn, which required a lot of time and effort, but in order to meet the needs of consumers, machines were put into production, which saved costs and improved efficiency. Yi costumes were originally only worn by Yi people, but with cultural tourism, more and more outsiders began to buy Yi costumes, and now even non-Yi people can wear Yi costumes. All these changes reflect a reinvention of tradition. The reinvention of traditions helps promote cultural heritage and development, as well as cultural diversity and exchange. However, in the process of reinvention, it is also necessary to respect and protect the values and rights of traditional culture and avoid excessive commercialization and cultural infringement.

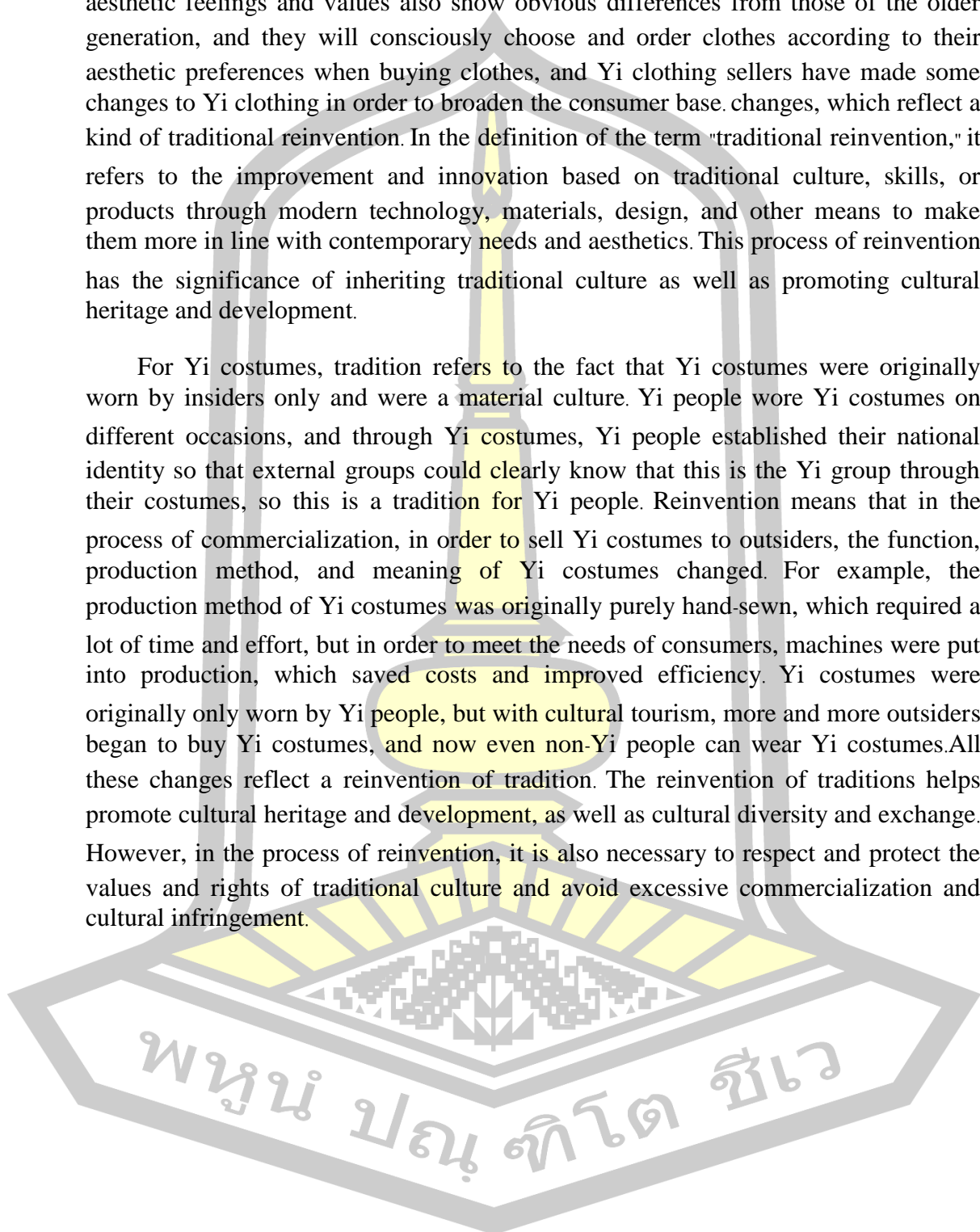




Figure 72 Jige Ajia used to be a worker in a garment factory but later started his own clothing store, which produces traditional Yi costumes.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 73 Most of the customers who visit Jige Ajia's costume shop are typically middle-aged, and middle-aged people favor traditional Yi costumes in terms of texture and style.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 74 The Yi Costume Commercial Street in Xichang, a centralized area for the sale of Yi costumes, attracts tourists from all over the country, where Yi costumes are not only used for sales but also for rent, and tourists will wear Yi costumes for photo-taking, generating the phenomenon of cultural tourism.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 75 The author interviewed groups such as sellers and designers of Yi costumes, and it can be seen that the government of Liangshan Prefecture has implemented many policies to support and encourage ethnic minorities to display and express their cultural identity to the outside world, which has become cultural capital used to develop products to create income. Commercialization of Yi costumes has

become a trend with the development of tourism and cultural industries, and commercialization of Yi costumes has driven the development of the regional economy and Yi costumes. With the development of tourism and cultural industries, the commercialization of Yi costumes has become a trend. The commercialization of Yi costumes has led to the development of the regional economy and the income of Yi costume practitioners, and more and more people have joined this industry.

Source: Fieldwork of Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, Photo : Zhu Bingjie , 2022

2.1.4 Cultural tourism place-Liangshan Prefecture ARENIU Art District

Cultural tourism refers to tourism activities with a cultural theme. In cultural tourism, tourists can explore and experience various cultural landscapes, including historical monuments, museums, art exhibitions, concerts, theater performances, traditional festivals, folk culture, and more. These tourism activities not only allow tourists to appreciate various cultural heritages but also enhance their understanding and knowledge of different cultures, promoting cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

In 2019, the government of Liangshan Prefecture aimed to lead the whole area of tourism with the deep integration of ethnic culture and tourism and achieve cross-border integration development, so the China Xichang-Daliangshan International Theatre Festival, operated by Liangshan Culture and Tourism Group, was held in Xichang City, Liangshan Prefecture, with 8 national productions, more than 300 performances, 10 forums, academic exchanges, and theatre workshops to achieve a new theatre festival myth and incubate a cultural tourism IP. Performing arts and exhibitions involving cross-ethnic and cross-cultural categories are an important part of the festival's activities and have made Liangshan's previous tourism "freeze" period stand the test of time and attract the attention of the capital, so the Areniu Art District was born.

Areniu is the first art district built in Liangshan Prefecture, located in Xichang, the capital of Liangshan Prefecture, which focuses on the development of Liangshan ethnic cultural exchange, ethnic artwork trading, and inheriting Liangshan non-foreign heritage culture and Liangshan handicraft culture. The Areniu Art District is a performing arts center that integrates academic exchange, exhibition, business, leisure, and entertainment. It is the first Yi cultural performance show in China, produced by the top professional team in China and funded by Liangshan Cultural Broadcasting Media Group, a demonstration base of China's cultural industry. Fire as the life totem of the Yi people runs throughout the show, from the footsteps of the nation's origin to the unfolding of the secular customs of the Yi people, presenting the

Yi people with fire as the carrier of their national emotions. On stage, the Yi people wear their own national costumes, which become a symbol of national identity and attract visitors from all over the world. This unique cultural experience not only allows visitors to feel the unique charm of Yi culture but also promotes communication and exchange between different cultures.

There are many studios and stores related to Yi culture in the Areniu Art District. There are four large art malls, 11 art stores, art galleries and artist studios, art teahouses, etc. The most popular stores in Areniu are those selling Yi costumes, and there are many local Yi costume studios in Areniu that combine modern aesthetic elements with new designs to improve the traditional Yi costume culture. The Yi costumes can be customized according to individual style preferences, and there are also Yi costume rental services. Visitors can choose from the photography studios in the district or take their own photos to experience the most unique Yi culture, and there are also many Yi culture-derived products in the art district, such as refrigerator stickers, cell phone cases, notebooks, etc., which are loved by consumers all over the world.

Cultural tourism has a positive effect on promoting the inheritance and protection of Yi costume culture, promoting local economic and social development, and improving the cultural quality and tourism experience of tourists. In the Areniu Art District, which is mainly art to develop ethnic cultural exchange, ethnic artwork trading, and the inheritance of the non-heritage culture of Liangshan and the handicraft culture of Liangshan, people from all over the world have seen the colorful Yi culture and promoted the development of the local economy.



Figure 76 The large-scale performance "A RE NIU" attracts tourists from all over the world, which makes it an important venue to showcase the Yi costume culture. The Yi people wear the costumes representing their ethnic identity to express themselves to

the outside world and let more consumers know about the Yi costume culture, which drives the development of the regional economy.

Source: Liangshan A RE NIU Art Center, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 77 Many tourists come to take photos and experience the unique charm of Yi culture in the Areniu Art District, where Yi costumes are available for sale and rental.

Source: Liangshan A RE NIU Art Center, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022



Figure 78 The Yi costumes in the Ajayi Art District have spawned many small goods, which have collector's value for visitors and allow a wider group to learn about Yi costume culture.

Source: Liangshan A RE NIU Art Center, Photo : Ding Xuerui , 2022

2.2 Yi Costume and International Exchange

In recent years, the Asia-Pacific region, the European region, and North America have been the main sources of tourists in China. China has also opened its doors to a number of countries, and the commodity market for Yi costumes has further expanded, with ethnic goods with distinctive cultures attracting many foreign tourists to buy them. Because of this, Yi costumes are always changing to meet the needs of the markets in the source country. They are also popular with tourists from all over the world, which has helped the economy of the Liangshan region grow.

In recent years, because of the support of national policies and the attention of the government of Liangshan Prefecture to the Yi costume culture, the Yi costume industry in Liangshan has been vigorously developed. In the Liangshan region, a special organization has been set up to lead the development of Yi costume culture. The Institute of Yi Costume Research has been built, ties with well-known Chinese costume colleges and costume experts have been strengthened, and a number of research projects have been done on Yi costume culture. As a result, Yi costume culture has been theoretically accumulated and sublimated.

In 2017, the Liangshan Yi costume participated in exhibitions at the University of Ottawa, Canada, and UNESCO. In 2018, the Liangshan Yi costume participated again in the United Nations conference forum and exhibition, fully demonstrating the new achievements in the development and research of Yi costume culture in recent years.

From July 15 to 20, 2018, the five-yearly General Assembly of the International Union of Anthropology and Ethnology of UNESCO (IUAES) was held in Brazil, and a delegation of expert representatives related to the Yi ethnic group in Yunnan, Sichuan, and Qianjiang, China, led by Dr. Wu Glutton, President of the International Union of Anthropology and Ethnology of Women (COTAW) and researcher at the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences, attended the Assembly. The delegates participated in the Bilingual Teaching Research Forum, the Cultural Exhibition Forum, and the Documentary Film Forum, and held a photo exhibition on Yi writing, culture, and natural ecology. Once again, Liangshan Yi costumes shone brightly, entering the UN conference forum and exhibition along with Yi medicine and bilingual education. The Yi cultural exhibition was rich in content, diverse in theme, and distinctive in character, displaying Yi costumes, Yi specialty foods, and Yi specialty architecture, respectively. The exhibition was held at the Federal University of Santa Catarina in Florianópolis, Brazil. The Yi costume section consisted of two parts: a physical exhibition and a photo exhibition, and the photo section included Yi costumes from the 3rd century AD to the 8th century AD and a Figure of the Yi people offering Yi charwa to General Secretary Xi Jinping when he visited the Yi people in Liangshan in 2018. The Yi costumes in the physical exhibition include Yi Chaerwa, the representative costume from Liangshan, the costumes of various regions

of the Yi people, women's costumes, etc. The Yi costumes from all over the world reflect the culture of the Yi people in different regions and let the people of the world see the Yi costume culture. The long, splendid, gorgeous, colorful, and far-reaching Liangshan Yi costume culture has finally gone out of Liangshan, to China, and to the world.



Figure 79 Foreign tourists wearing Yi costumes attend the Liangshan Yi Torch Festival event, and the commercialization of Yi costumes has produced the phenomenon of cultural tourism, which has led to the internationalization of Yi costumes.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)



Figure 80 Visitors from abroad buy Yi costume goods and experience the process of making them, so that more consumers can learn about Yi costume culture.

Source: <http://www.leshan.cn> (February , 2023)



Figure 81 Tourists from all over the world experience the local culture while wearing Yi costumes. Yi costumes were originally a specific kind of dress for Yi people, but with the process of commercialization, the function of Yi costumes has changed, and people from all over the world can now wear Yi costumes, which reflects a kind of traditional reinvention.

Source: <http://www.leshan.cn> (February , 2023)

Now, not only do foreign tourists, designers, and journalists come to the Liangshan region to learn about Yi culture and buy Yi costume products, but many professional designers are also actively showing and promoting Yi costume products in the international market and have created their own costume brands. For example, Soft Mountains was founded by a young Yi designer, Long Hongziwei, who graduated from the London College of Fashion and established her own niche Yi costumes and accessories brand in London after graduation. Soft Mountains hopes to infuse traditional culture with a youthful soul through contemporary design by drawing inspiration from traditional Yi culture and accessories.

Soft Mountains was selected as one of the seven best new designer brands in China by overseas Vogue. "Soft Mountains" was born from a love and concern for "nature, tradition, and craftsmanship." Long Hongziwei said in an interview, "I am lucky to be of Yi ethnicity, and it is the wisdom of my ancestors that provides a constant source of inspiration for soft mountains." From the very beginning of the brand, I hope to pass on the unique aesthetics and exquisite skills of ethnic minorities through soft mountains so that more people can understand the long and deep history and culture of ethnic minorities and thus help local people improve their social and economic environment.

Since its inception, Soft Mountains has been working with artisans from the Liangshan region, who have provided the brand with inspiration and advice in the design of its products. Long Hongziwei's designs as a Yi brand designer are not bound to the identity of her minority background, but rather to her own experience, exploring and pursuing the cultural marks that infect her from an individual's perspective. In her seven consecutive seasons of design, Long Hongziwei has blended the influence of her own minority culture, Han culture during her school days, and Western culture during her European studies. text.

Long Hong Ziwei has truly achieved "nationality is the world" in the less than 6 years since the brand Soft Mountains was founded. Not only has the brand collaborated with stores at home and abroad, but it has also reached a global cooperation with the British high-end e-commerce site Net-A-Porter and successfully entered Lane Crawford. It can be seen that the young designer Long Hong Ziwei did not think purely from the design point of view at the beginning of the brand, but from the market's perspective, thinking about the characteristics of the brand, so that from the moment Long Hong Ziwei integrates the art and culture of ethnic minorities into the blood of the brand, it is destined for its uniqueness.

Faced with the loss of cultural heritage due to a lack of innovation today, the mission of preserving heritage falls on the younger generation. Designer Long Hongziwei offers a new possibility for cultural heritage. She chooses to return to craftsmanship and promote ethnic minorities' traditional culture through clothing and accessories that provide a contemporary language, connecting the ethnic group with the world from a new perspective, so that Yi clothing can truly enter the international market and people's lives.

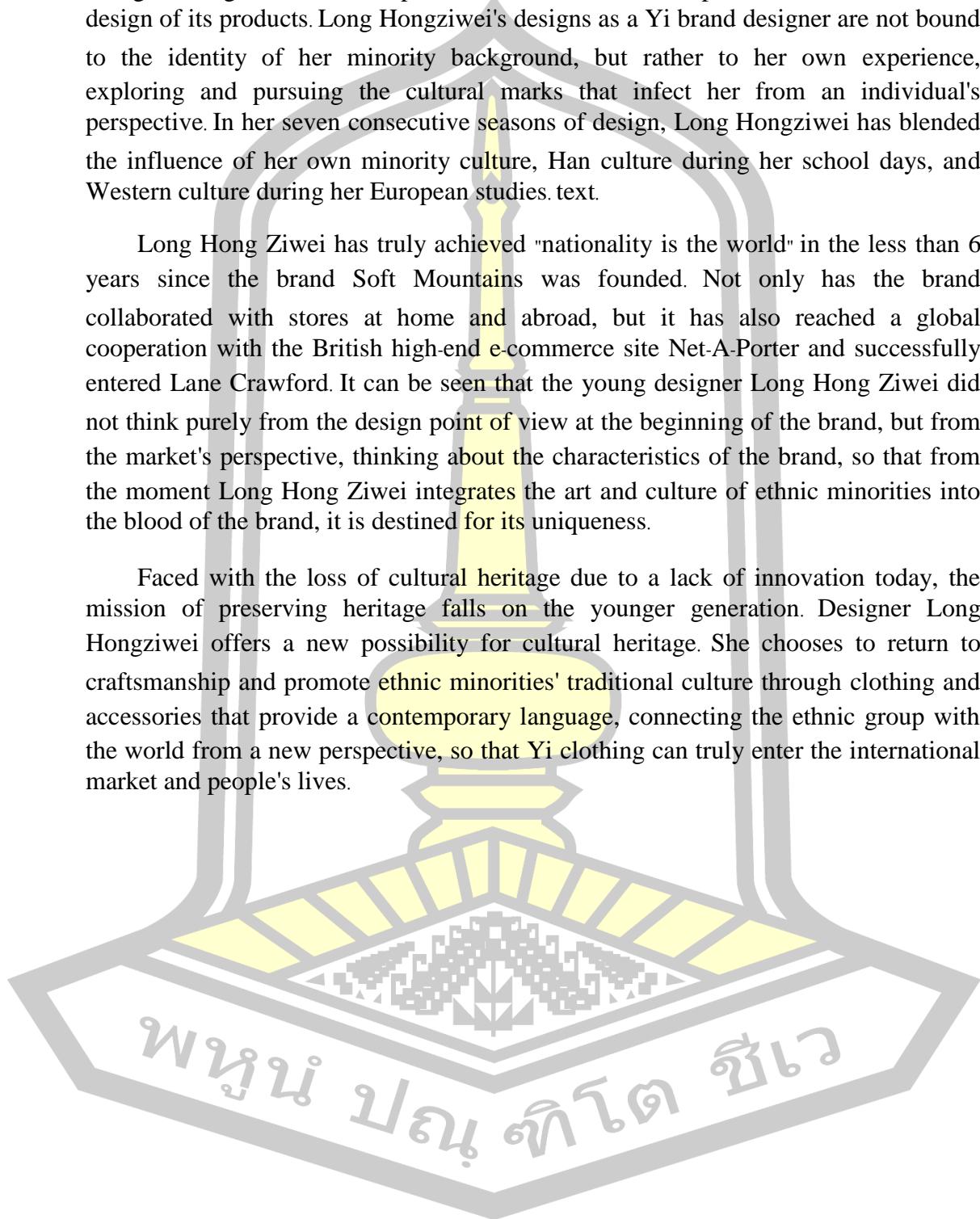




Figure 82 The famous Chinese actress "Zhang Ziyi" is wearing a Yi costume on the cover of the international magazine "Marie Claire." The clothes and accessories worn by the young Yi designer Long Hongziwei, who founded the brand Soft Moutains in London, opened a window between the nation and the world with the modern aesthetics of Yi costumes.

Source: Soft Moutains Brand Studio, Accessed 2022

2.3 Changes in yi costumes consumption patterns and recommendations

2.3.1 Changes in consumption patterns of Yi costumes

In today's market economy, the living environment of the Yi people in Liangshan is very different from that of their predecessors, and traditional culture is gradually facing a crisis of inheritance. As a material culture, the cultural and folkloric connotations of Yi costumes have gradually disappeared, leaving behind more of an ornament to be appreciated and a symbol of identity within the community. The open social environment has made the commercialization of Liangshan Yi costumes a historical necessity, and at the same time, commercialization is also a reasonable direction for rapid economic development. Costume artists in a market-oriented environment have relatively free creative space, and accordingly, they must take the market into account when producing to satisfy the whole society and various aesthetic preferences of consumer groups, which to a certain extent promotes the diversification of costume culture. In addition, commercialization has driven the development of the local economy and society, promoted the influence of traditional dress culture, and provided a platform for the dusty national culture to come into contact with the

outside world. However, the commodity market in Liangshan Yi society, which is in economic transition, is not yet perfect, and this has brought many problems.

A. Yi costumes face crisis of inheritors

The division of labor in society, the commodity economy, the communication media, and the wave of part-time jobs have removed many individuals in traditional societies from their original social identity attributes. First of all, in the traditional social structure, women were responsible for dressing all members of the family, and the craft was passed down from mother to daughter from generation to generation. But at that time, dress-making required a lot of time and effort, and generally speaking, it took months or even years for a set of clothes to be sewn from piles of fabric. Along with the development of the social economy, the division of labor became more and more detailed, and there were artisans who specialized in dress making, and they could use mechanized machines to sew instead of the original hand sewing and industrial synthetic fabrics instead of pure hand-made wool and linen products. In addition, along with the social identity attributes of the dress artists, their aesthetic concepts have been transformed, and they have the freedom to give full play to their individuality in terms of color, pattern selection, and style design.

At the same time, along with the strong invasion of modern costumes in recent years, traditional costumes have unconsciously formed an implicit competitive relationship with them, and in order to seize the market advantage, quality and beauty have been put into a secondary position, and price and sales have become the topics of much attention. Women in traditional societies create unconscious beauty in their lives all the time, but now that the traditional standard of fine craftsmanship has been broken, the spiritual and cultural connotations and emotional expression in craft making are gradually disappearing, while most young people are almost unwilling to learn this craft nowadays, preferring to go out to work, and only a very small number of Yi girls learn sewing from their mothers at home to make ends meet, and the loss of successors is inevitable. The loss of successors is also mainly due to the fact that traditional Yi costume making does not directly have practical value. The breakage of the Yi costume chain in Liangshan will directly lead to the loss of traditional Yi costume crafts, some of which have already been lost or are extinct, which is a sign of the heavy loss of Yi costume culture. The above discussion shows that the traditional costumes of the Yi people in Liangshan are facing a huge crisis of succession, and the situation of inheritance is extremely unpromising. (Xu Yan, 2021)

B. The contradiction between production and production

The first is the balance between tradition and modernity. Some areas in Liangshan Prefecture are lagging behind in development, and traditional Yi costumes are handmade, with low output and difficulty forming a systematic scale. On the contrary, if a large number of modern machine-based equipment is used for production, many traditional crafts will inevitably face the crisis of being lost again, so how to balance traditional and modern production methods also needs to be considered. Then there is the poor performance of the products. Traditional Yi costumes are decorated with lace, which is made of a variety of materials and involves complicated processes, long production cycles, and high costs.

Nowadays, machine embroidery has replaced hand embroidery, and some of the Yi costumes are "extremely incongruous" in terms of fabric, resulting in some Yi costumes and their patterns lacking cultural connotations. In recent years, there have been some costume crafts in the tourism market of Liangshan under the banner of Yi traditional culture, but most of these costume products are inexpensive and rough, not really Yi costume products. Although, to a certain extent, foreign tourists are aware of the Yi culture in Liangshan, at the same time, they are also dissatisfied with the quality of the products, which in effect reduces their awareness and favorability of the Yi traditional culture. This inevitably reduces awareness of and goodwill toward Yi traditional culture. Finally, there is the drawback of machine production. With the high-speed operation of the market economy, the industrialization and mechanization of Liangshan Yi costume production is unstoppable, but the problem that follows is that when the number of orders is constantly increased, it may become the norm to outsource the production process of costumes to piecework and contract processing, which will certainly pursue economic benefits and production efficiency, but the quality of national costumes is worrying, and the reproduction patterns produced by machines lack personalization. For example, the Yi costumes sold in the current Liangshan costumes market are mainly improved stage costumes and regular costumes, with rough workmanship and reduced pattern decoration compared to the previous handmade production, which used to be purely hand embroidered by craftsmen, showing a staggered visual effect. If we continue, the traditional Yi costume skills will face a crisis of inheritance, and the essence of the craft will be lost to the public.

C. The traditional Yi costume is changing due to the impact of foreign cultures

Since the "reform and opening up," China's market economy and globalization have accelerated, while over half a century ago, Liangshan society was still in a closed slave system and was not fully familiar with modern novelties, thus making Yi traditional costumes and their culture vulnerable to the impact and influence of foreign cultures. Modern aesthetic laws put the traditional aesthetic concepts of the Yi under pressure; urban life made modern costumes more fashionable; and cheap fabrics and other costumes were sold in the township market, all of which exacerbated the difficult situation of traditional Yi costumes. Costume making comes from a love of life and a desire for beauty. However, when costume makers and the general public are interested in how other cultures affect them, their tastes change in a big way.

As mentioned earlier, Liangshan Yi costumes have typical regional and age characteristics. Nowadays, the regional characteristics of the costumes in the three major dialect areas are gradually fading, and confusion in the function of cultural markers is the norm, such as the headdress worn by married women in the past, but now girls can buy it everywhere. Secondly, there is a cross-cultural confusion between two or more places and between popular and traditional aesthetic concepts. After Yi dress artists and consumers were influenced by foreign cultures, their aesthetics changed accordingly, and they were exposed to the new society and saw many standards of dress defined as "beautiful" by the public on the Internet, including patterns and cut structures. The aesthetic rules inherited by the predecessors for thousands of years were gradually formed in the long-term production life, and modern people cannot fully appreciate all the aesthetic emotions in the creation process of the predecessors, nor do they fully understand the connotation of today's popular "beauty" and its design rules, so the combination of the two is bound to result in a "disharmony" situation. Once again, the harmonious natural order is destroyed, including the dilution of traditional moral concepts, the disintegration of traditional village society, and the cognitive mutation of traditional value systems. The more the craftsmen are subject to economic factors in the production process, the stronger the "money concept" between consumers and merchants, and the more the emotional content embedded in the quality and dress-making process that used to be valued disappears, further weakening the Yi people's motivation to pass on their traditional dress-making skills. Therefore, commercialization is a double-edged sword that has both positive and negative effects on the inheritance of Liangshan Yi costumes.

2.3.2 Suggestions for consumption patterns of Yi costumes

The preservation of Yi costume culture is a systematic project that requires the Yi costume to be protected as a whole. Therefore, we need to pay attention to the apparel itself first, and then link the apparel production, organization, and operation, market sales, and folk customs and sex, etc., to build up a complete cultural industry chain, so as to achieve the protection of costumes' overall effect. In addition, Yi costumes are a commodity with a deep cultural heritage and a good cultural future. In terms of culture In terms of products or tourism services, it can generate good economic benefits and unique artistic charm.

A. Improve the policy system to ensure sustainable development

The development of the Yi costume industry should not only focus on the economic benefits generated but also on preservation and inheritance. Innovative development based on the preservation of Yi culture will not be possible without the support of relevant policies to further enhance its social and market value, so that the traditional Yi costume culture can take on a new life. The protective inheritance and development of the Yi culture in Liangshan requires the local government to formulate plans and issue policies in order to protect the social interests of those in the costume industry, create a favorable business environment, and promote costume artists and sellers to engage in the Yi costume industry in a more active and secure manner. The government can propose specific countermeasures for the industrialization of Yi costumes by protecting and developing the employment base of Yi costumes, training craft techniques, jointly creating development platforms, broadening sales channels, and expanding market share.

B. Establish brand awareness and integrate cultural systems

Yi apparel should establish brand awareness, diversify product development, and adopt integrated marketing for communication. With the development of the regional economy and the increasing improvement of people's living standards, poor quality and cheap products are welcomed by people, but people prefer high-quality products, and for products, quality is the top priority.

Therefore, in the process of brand creation, Yi costumes products must pay attention to ensuring the quality of products, continue to invest in innovation, improve product design standards so as to better regulate and manage products, grasp quality control standards so as to improve the quality of products, and enhance customer satisfaction with the products. goodwill and trustworthiness. Secondly, we can focus on helping two leading local organizations in the Yi costume industry make the Yi costume brand a kind of market capital to attract consumers and investors by registering trademarks. Finally, the promotion of the Yi costumes brand can also make use of other cultural resources, such as making full use of torch festivals, Bimo culture, Yi costumes cultural festivals, and even other types of cultural expositions

and commodity fairs at home and abroad, where the charm of the Yi costumes brand can be fully displayed and the popularity of the Yi costumes brand can be expanded with a large number of people.

C. Strengthen tourism development and showcase cultural connotations

In recent years, with the development of tourism in the Liangshan region, the traditional culture and costume art of the Yi people have been deeply explored and presented to the outside world, becoming a unique cultural value. Liangshan Yi costumes are rich in ethnic characteristics and models. The style is diverse, exquisite, ancient, and elegant, reflecting strong artistic expression and aesthetic tension. In addition, the Yi costume patterns are rich in symbolic meaning and full of rich cultural connotations, which can have a greater attraction to tourists.

Tourists learn more about Yi costume culture when tourism and Yi costume culture collide, and Yi costume culture is strengthened. The development and protection of Yi costume culture and the realization of its contemporary transformation. Therefore, Liangshan Yi costumes have a greater potential for development as cultural tourism products.

First, the cultural characteristics of the area are needed to create personalized tourism products that can draw in tourists. The color resources are deeply explored. Secondly, to turn tourists' desires to buy into actual purchases, it requires the creation of certain atmospheric conditions. Increasing the participation, diversity, and culture of tourism festivals and daily activities not only creates an excellent platform for the display and sale of costumes, but also creates excellent conditions for stimulating tourists' desires to buy. For example, the "Torch Festival" beauty contest in Liangshan Prefecture is an event for young Yi men and women to showcase their Yi costume culture. These festivals, after careful planning, can become a sales platform for Yi costumes and related tourism products and provide the best opportunity to display and market costume tourism products, which is a very effective marketing method. Finally, we will start deep cooperation with various famous tourism companies inside and outside of Liangshan Prefecture to achieve mutual benefit and a win-win situation for the Liangshan Yi costume tourism industry.

D. The process of protecting production and development of non-genetic heritage

Preserving the traditional form of Yi costumes is only a matter of protecting their appearance. If the costume-making process is lost or missing, these native costumes cannot be presented to people again; therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of the Yi costume-making process and its inheritors. In today's society, many traditional costume crafts are facing a lack of information. Investigating, recording, researching, and discussing the costume making process also provides learning opportunities for future generations to reacquaint themselves with ethnic

skills, and one can go on to record the skillful process of Yi costumes under limited conditions and strive to improve audio-visual and textual materials so that the illustrations and texts can be easily preserved and provide the inheritors and researchers of ethnic costume crafts with a complete and detailed reference. Since the inheritors of Yi costume crafts are composed of folk craftsmen, the protection of outstanding costume artists is the key to the sustainable development of Yi costume culture, and the outstanding costume artists can be trained centrally or continue their inheritance through the mentor-apprentice system, such as in higher education institutions and specialized costume training courses, so that the majority of learners have mastered certain costume making skills. fundamentally protects the continuous inheritance of Yi costumes. Furthermore, trainers can be taught how to increase their economic income through costumes, as well as the basic conditions of the current ethnic costume market, to assist and support them on their path to prosperity.

Conclusion

Although the dress is unique to each ethnic group, in the context of modernity, ethnicities do not exist in isolation but have relationships and interactions with other groups. including government policies. Resulting in the phenomenon of turning culture into a commodity. Here is the clothing of the Yi people. from the costume in the dimension of cultural identity Has been served as a commodity. It has influenced the phenomenon of inventing various traditions that follow, such as product stores, modern fashion, that is presented in Chapter 5, etc., which is a reflection of the relationship with the outside world. The Yi people express their ethnic identity through their clothing. In the process of expression, they reap the benefits of cultural tourism and creative products. Therefore, there was a cultural invention that affected the production process and methods of producing apparel for sale to outsiders. Moreover, the properties, functions, and meanings of the products themselves have all changed. It is a new invention. To express their culture to the outside world through sales, production, and cultural tourism. This will increase income and promote the economic development of the Liangshan region.

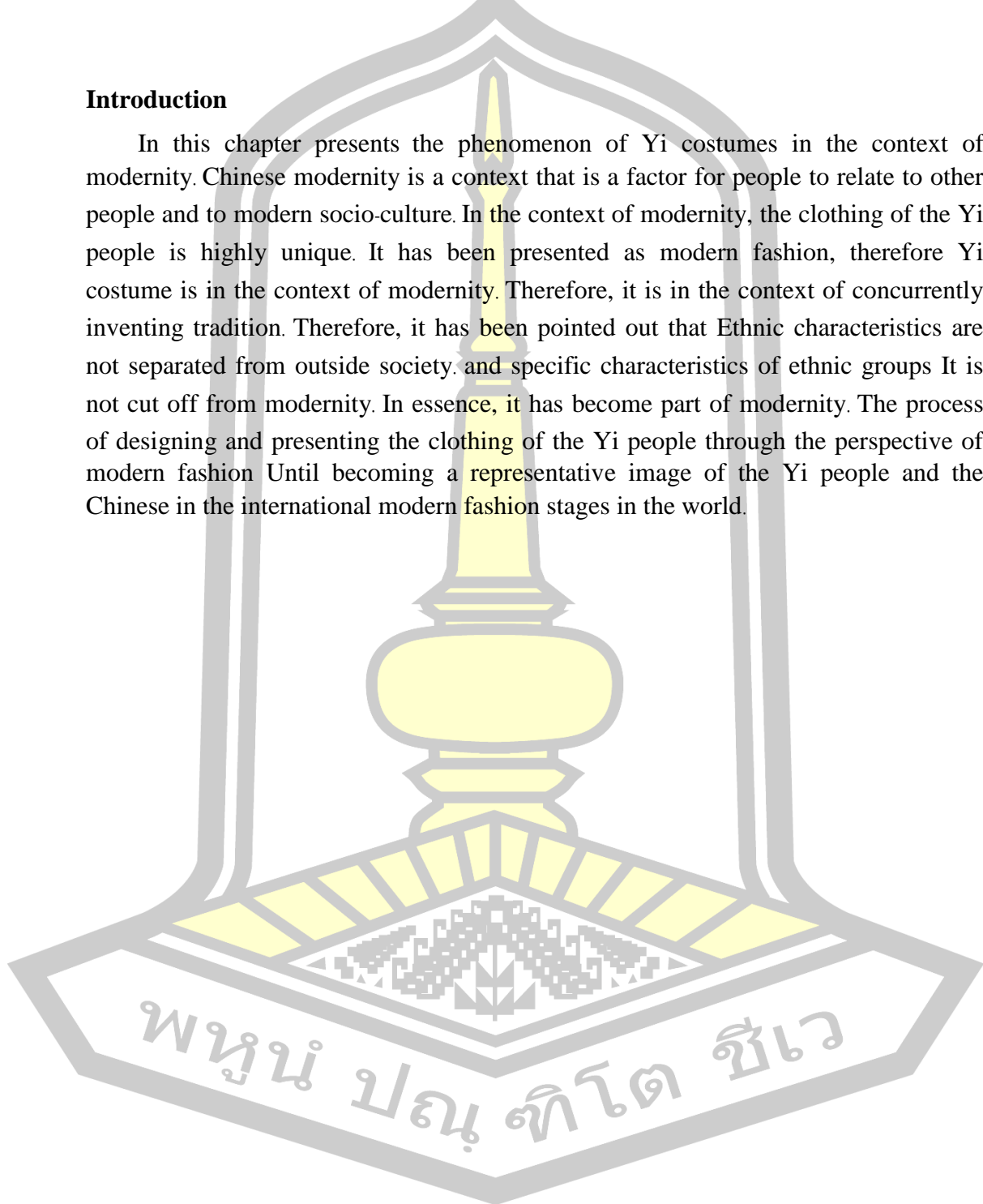
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CHAPTER V

Modern Fashion from Yi's Costumes in the Context of Modernity

Introduction

In this chapter presents the phenomenon of Yi costumes in the context of modernity. Chinese modernity is a context that is a factor for people to relate to other people and to modern socio-culture. In the context of modernity, the clothing of the Yi people is highly unique. It has been presented as modern fashion, therefore Yi costume is in the context of modernity. Therefore, it is in the context of concurrently inventing tradition. Therefore, it has been pointed out that Ethnic characteristics are not separated from outside society. and specific characteristics of ethnic groups It is not cut off from modernity. In essence, it has become part of modernity. The process of designing and presenting the clothing of the Yi people through the perspective of modern fashion Until becoming a representative image of the Yi people and the Chinese in the international modern fashion stages in the world.



Part 1 : The Development of Yi Costume in the Context of Modernity

In modern China, the aesthetic integration of traditional clothing and fashion design is of great significance in improving the cultural added value of clothing, meeting the demand for fashion consumption, creating national brands, and developing domestic and international markets. In the era of globalization, the competition in the garment industry is becoming more and more fierce, and garment designers from different countries pay much attention to the borrowing of traditional cultural elements in their designs in order to promote the culture and national characteristics of their own garments.

China began reforming and opening up in 1978, and the economy grew at a rapid pace. However, while the economy developed rapidly, the phenomenon of unbalanced economic development between regions began to appear gradually, and the economic development of the eastern coastal regions was significantly faster than that of the central and western regions, and the development of the national economy showed a huge gap. After the reform and opening up, the political and economic development of the Liangshan region is very unbalanced, and the gap between the rich and the poor in the towns and the mountainous areas is large. This, together with the fact that the Liangshan region is located on the southwest border of China, the harsh natural geography, and the backward production methods, have led to a growing gap between the Liangshan region and the coastal cities of China. Because China's social essence and political mission are to eliminate polarization and eventually achieve common prosperity, the Chinese central government, in order to reflect the country's key support for the western region, formulated and promulgated "Several Policy Measures for the Implementation of Western Development" in October 2000, in which it was proposed that the key tasks The implementation of the Western Development Strategy and the acceleration of the development of the central and western regions are important steps in China's modernization strategy and have played an important role in promoting the development of the Liangshan region.

During the period of western development after 2000, the government of Liangshan promulgated many policies that encouraged the Yi people to transform their ethnic culture into cultural capital for profit. The rapid economic development of the Liangshan region during this period caused great changes in the ethnic economy, ethnic culture, and Yi costume culture, among which "modernization" had a double effect on the development of the Yi costume in Liangshan. On the one hand, modernization has had a constructive effect on the development of the Yi people's costumes. On the other hand, a large number of modern dress systems and cultural factors have entered ethnic areas, causing an impact on local dress traditions and aesthetic psychology, which have a huge impact on dress. The continuity and stability of traditional Yi costumes have changed. This, along with the obvious differences in

economics, culture, and ways of life between cities and villages, has led to a trend of diversity in the modernized Yi costumes in the Liangshan region.

Modernity in the Liangshan region is a continuous process of transformation from the existing civilization to a more advanced one. In modern society, new lifestyles have slowly permeated ethnic minorities, and new concepts and aesthetic cultures have gradually replaced the complex and cumbersome ethnic costumes with modern, simple, and fashionable ones. To meet market demand, Liangshan Yi costumes have started to include elements that meet the aesthetic needs of modern people. This highlights modernity while keeping the essence of traditional Yi costume culture, and it has sped up the commercialization, fashion, and industrialization of Liangshan Yi costumes.

In February 2018, General Secretary Xi Jinping came to the Liangshan region and walked into the homes of poor Yi people to discuss poverty eradication strategies with local cadres and people. The general secretary put forward guidance for local poverty eradication efforts, which mentioned the need to strengthen the training of practical technology and vocational skills for villagers, so that everyone can master a skill, to increase stable income by developing production and going out to work, and to promote the economic development of minority areas by developing a distinctive economy with a distinctive culture, which can drive poverty alleviation employment by taking advantage of local culture and natural resources.

Since 2000, many designers from the academic class have joined the Liangshan Yi costume industry, and ethnic costume brands have been created. These designers have one thing in common: they have studied the traditional skills of Yi costumes, analyzed the cultural connotations of Liangshan Yi costumes, explored the similarities between Liangshan Yi costumes and modern costume design, as well as the design methods that combine ethnic costume culture with modern fashion. From the perspective of design aesthetics, the designers emphasized the need to reflect humanistic care and highlight individual consumer needs in ethnic costumes, and from the perspective of ecological aesthetics, they emphasized that innovative Yi costume patterns should inherit the ecological beauty of traditional Yi costume culture and coexist with nature and apply contemporary design concepts to integrate traditional Yi costume ethnic elements into modern life and innovate new styles and patterns. From the perspective of aesthetic anthropology, traditional Yi costumes are an important form and medium for Yi people to perceive the world and its beauty, and innovative Yi costumes should highlight the individual expression of Yi youth in pursuit of fashion and their unique national cultural and aesthetic needs. Therefore, modern Yi costumes should make the fabrics, colors, and patterns of Yi costumes more relevant to the life, work, and leisure of current consumers. Focus on building brand awareness and use modern corporate management and sales models to get the

most out of the economy and help promote the Yi costume market and economy in the Liangshan region.

Part 2 : Cases and analyses of the combination of traditional culture and modern fashion

The beautiful, elegant, generous, and practical costumes of the Yi people of Liangshan have a strong ethnic artistic style, while the elements of Yi costumes are an integral part of Yi culture, and their unique artistic connotations are an important form of Yi cultural accumulation that has been preserved to this day. In today's society, it will inevitably have an impact on modern clothing as well, pushing designers to combine their own traditional elements with modern fashion trends in order to apply them to modern clothing design so that they can exude a strong ethnic flavor, and with the modern transformation of Yi clothing elements, a new clothing cultural environment will be constructed.

Modern fashion Yi costumes combine traditional elements with contemporary styles to create a unique and modern look. modern-fashion Yi costumes reflect a desire to preserve the cultural heritage of the Yi people while also embracing contemporary styles and trends. It represents a fusion of the old and the new, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Yi people while also embracing the changes brought about by modernization.

2.1 The business case for modernity in yi costumes

2.1.1 Combination of tradition and modernity: Aniu Aga

Aniu Aga is a representative inheritor of the national intangible cultural heritage of Yi dress, a representative Figure of the inheritance and innovation of the Liangshan Yi dress, and an independent designer. Born in the Liangshan region, Aniu Aga's mother sewed clothes for her with her Yi embroidery skills when her family was poor and had no money to buy clothes, so influenced by her mother, she started learning Yi embroidery and making clothes since she was a child, which was the most unforgettable memory of Aniu Aga as a child and also ignited her dream of becoming a Yi costume designer.

After graduating from university, Aniu Aga always tried to realize her dream of designing costumes. In 2004, she began to conduct in-depth research and meticulous collation of Yi costumes in Yi areas across the country, and in 2005, she decided to go back to her hometown and set up a studio according to her own ideas. Based on the inheritance and protection of traditional skills, she set up a three-way platform for designers, folk craftsmen, and the market. Through this platform, designers can find

craftsmen in the deep mountains and learn traditional skills, while inheritors who can't leave the deep mountains can improve their lives through these skills. Aniu Aga has made more people aware of the Yi people's traditional handicrafts and culture in this way. It also allows more people to take the road out of poverty and get rich. Since 2009, Aniu Aga has been working with a local school in Liangshan to establish a Yi costume embroidery program in the form of a joint school-enterprise project that encourages more young people to learn traditional crafts. During this time, a lot of professionals with skills in Yi costume embroidery have been trained, and several bases for protecting and passing on intangible cultural heritage have been set up. In 2013, the Liangshan Nuosu Culture Investment Co.

In 2018, Aniu Aga saw the first snowfall on Liangshan Mountain on her way home. The snow-capped peaks were like "Chaerwa," a wool product that has been popular among the Yi people for thousands of years. So, inspired by this, Aniu Aga began to try to integrate traditional Yi costumes into modern costumes. The chaerwa is a woolen drapery that is essential to the daily life of the Yi people. It comes in long or short lengths, from pure white to black and blue, and can be as long as below the knee with a fringe at the bottom. Aniu Aga Glutton got her ideas for her first series of Yi costumes, "Between White Clouds," from this most important part of Yi traditional dress.

In 2018, AniuAga's work "Between White Clouds" was launched at China International Fashion Week. In her opinion, tradition and innovation are very important; not only do we need to combine the most traditional and quintessential parts of Yi costumes with modern aesthetics, but we also need to make the traditional costumes more beautiful so that more people can wear them, in order to make Yi costume culture better known around the world. The "Between the White Clouds" series consisted of 33 sets of costumes, mostly white, all made from Yi wool using weaving and rolling techniques, a national intangible cultural heritage. The designers combined the traditional Yi tassels, indigo dyeing, and silver ornaments with the fashionable international organ pleats, asymmetrical design, and wide shoulders. The straight-draped coat is decorated with the classic Yi pattern of ram's horns and is worn with a high-collared, solid-colored sweater. The simple and elegant camisole dress made of pressed felt, the hard jacket with a tower-shaped gradient skirt, etc. After the designer's transformation, the "Chaerwa" became a piece of fashionable clothing that adapted to changing trends and demonstrated the great potential of ethnic fashion. The accessories used in the work are mainly Yi traditional silver jewelry. The Yi silver ornaments are made with exquisite workmanship and skill, with more than 20 processes, and this set of handcrafted skills has been included in the national intangible cultural heritage list. In the creation of this series of works, Aniu Aga breaks the traditional combination of patterns and ways of wearing Yi silver jewelry,

trying to present a new communication and interaction between silver jewelry, costumes, and people.

In an exclusive interview after the conference, Aniu Aga said, "This release is to use the powerful platform of China International Fashion Week to unveil the mystery of ethnic culture and art." Ethnic costumes are not just old traditional objects, but all the exquisite costumes you see can be seen everywhere in the life of the Yi people. "As an ethnic independent designer, I have the responsibility and mission to let the world appreciate the wisdom of Chinese ethnic culture and feel the fashion trend of ethnic art." Aniu Aga has been making efforts in this area and is dedicated to digging up the traditional culture of the Yi people for thousands of years and building a bridge between the essence of ethnic culture, the commercial market, and community development. The "White Cloud" is a new chapter, and Aniu Aga Gluttony has added the strongest ethnic fashion color to Chinese fashion. (Aniu Aga.2022:interview)



Figure 83 At the launch of "Between the White Clouds," the fusion of traditional Yi costume weaving skills and fashion elements was displayed through a model runway show, preserving the texture of the original Yi costume while incorporating modern elements, which won the hearts of many people.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)



Figure 84 At the "Between the White Clouds" work launch site, the straight coat is decorated with the classic Yi pattern sheep's horn (left), the innovative costume pattern is derived from the Yi swirl pattern (middle), and the fashionable costumes are made up of the Yi cloud pattern (right). The use of traditional Yi patterns and the fusion of modern-type dress shapes reflect a unique aesthetic.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)

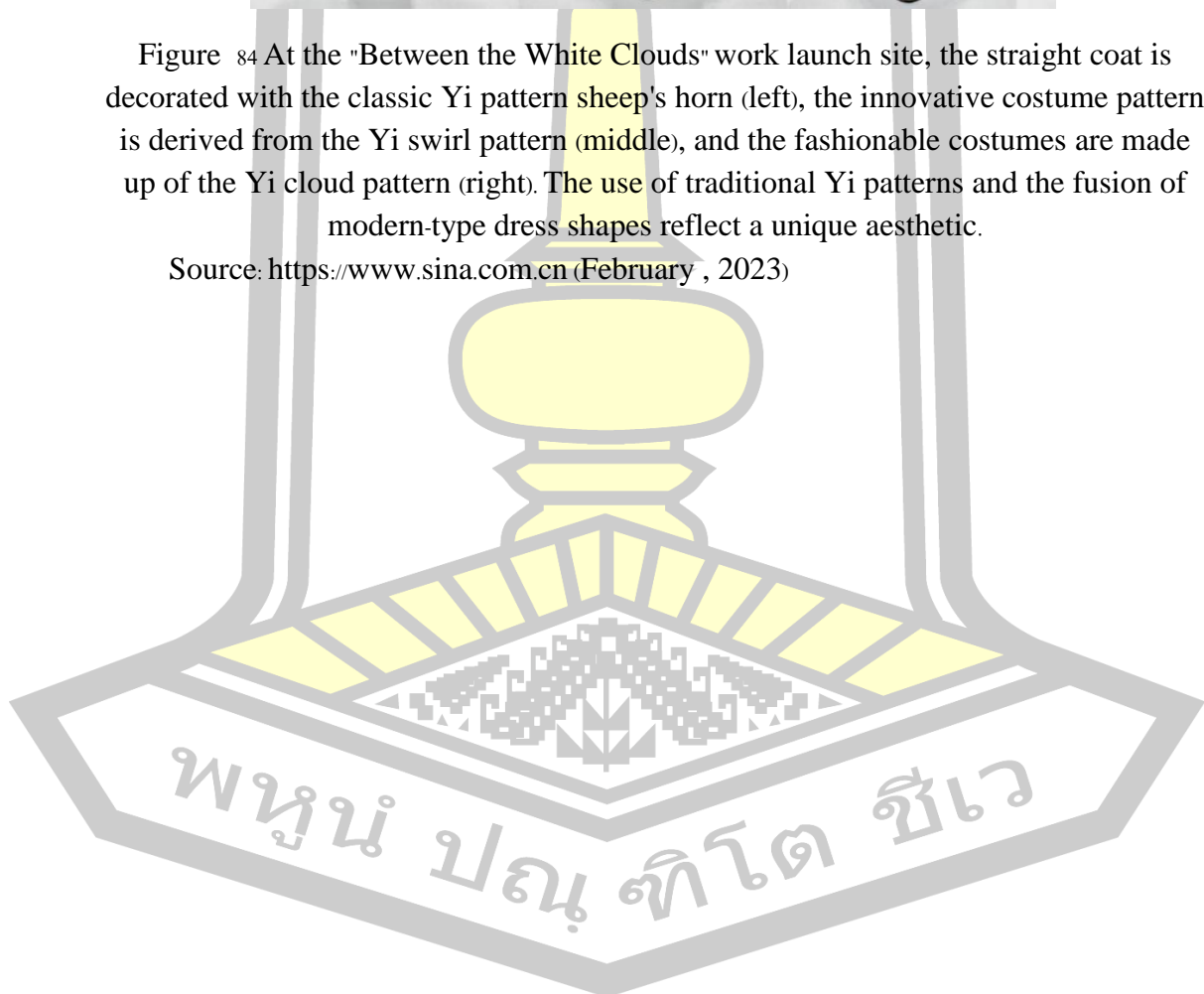




Figure 85 At the launch of "Between White Clouds," the designer transformed the Yi traditional costume "Charwa" into a fashionable item that adapts to changing trends and demonstrates men's unique charm.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)

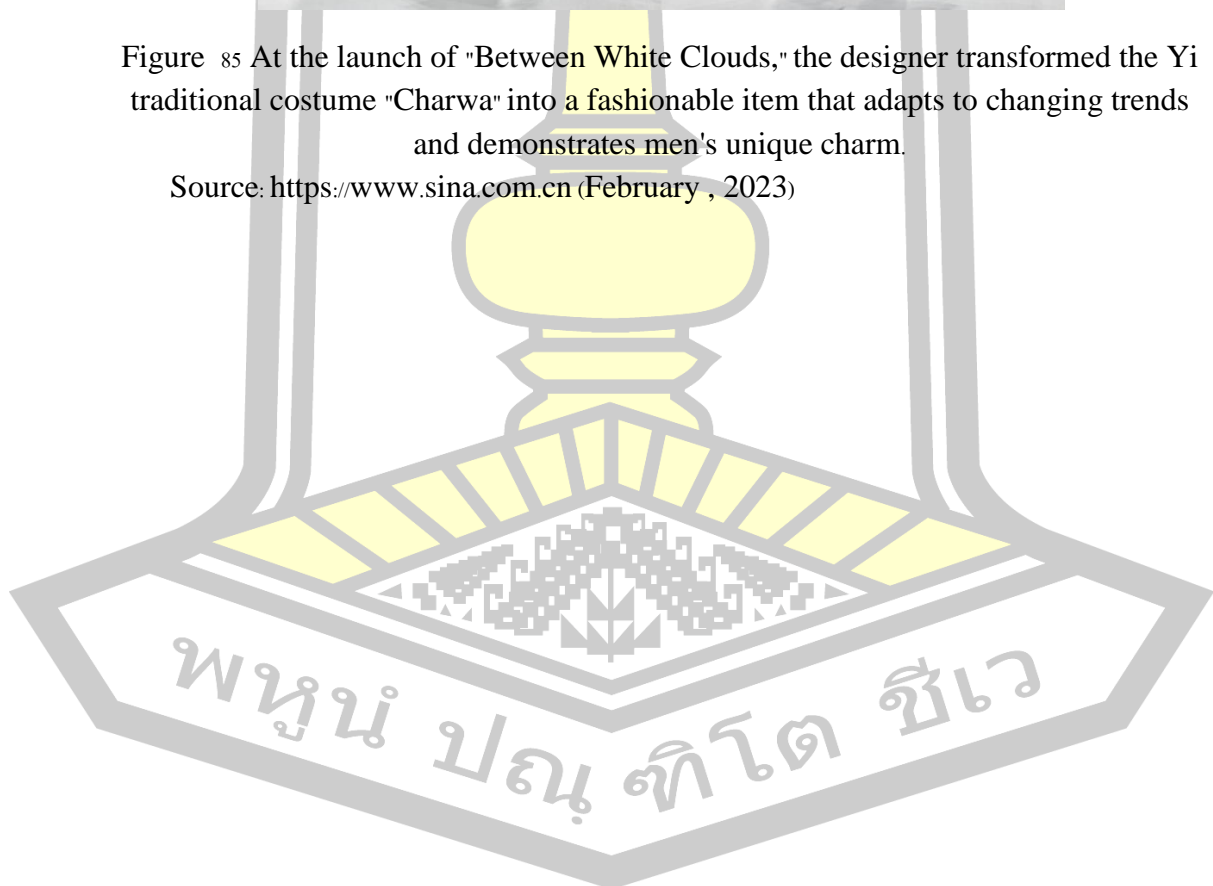




Figure 86 The accessories used in the costumes are mainly traditional Yi silver ornaments. Aniu Aga tried to create a new communication and interaction between silver, costumes, and people in this series of works by breaking the inherent pattern combination and wearing style of Yi silver ornaments, which the audience loved.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)



Figure 87 Between the "Between the White Clouds" work launch site, Aniu Aga (center), and her "Between the White Clouds" series of works, she has been insisting on the combination of tradition and modernity to build a bridge between traditional ethnic culture, the commercial market, and community development.

Source: <https://www.sina.com.cn> (February , 2023)

On October 10, 2019, designer Aniu Aga appeared on the stage of "Jinxiu China: 2019 China Intangible Cultural Heritage Costume Show" with her latest 47 sets of Yi costumes, the "Yunmeng Yi Mountain" series. The show once again showed the world the infinite charm of Yi costumes and formed a trend for the most dazzling national style. Led by the Gong Wangfu Museum of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China and co-sponsored by the Non-Foreign Heritage Office of the China Textile Industry Federation, the Beijing Fashion Institute of Technology, and the Organizing Committee of China International Fashion Week, "Jinxiu Zhonghua" combines the understanding of Chinese culture with aesthetic judgment. Through the stage of Jinxiu Zhonghua and the excellent ethnic culture, the show shows the positive spirit of the Yi people and their desire for a better life.

The "Yunmeng Yi Mountain" series of clothing comes from the timeless trendy item "Chaerwa" in Liangshan. It is a hand-made woolen garment worn by the Yi people for thousands of years. It is an essential woolen drapery for the Yi people in their daily lives, like a cloak, with both long and short lengths, and is the most representative garment of the Yi people, with exquisite craftsmanship, fully demonstrating the wisdom of the Yi people. The main element of the work is the national non-heritage Yi wool weaving technique, which is intended to depict the sheep and mountains that the Yi people see every day, expressing their gratitude to the mountains and sheep for their gifts, which also reflects the nature worship of the Yi people.

The "Yunmeng Yi Mountain" series of costumes bring out the spirit of Yi costume in the design and give a new life to Yi costume culture through inheritance and innovation. The Yi costumes designed by Aniu Aga are innovative designs based on today's aesthetic trends, design consciousness, the historical context, and the aesthetic characteristics of traditional Yi costumes. They are a successful exploration of the transformation of traditional costumes into modern fashion in modern design.

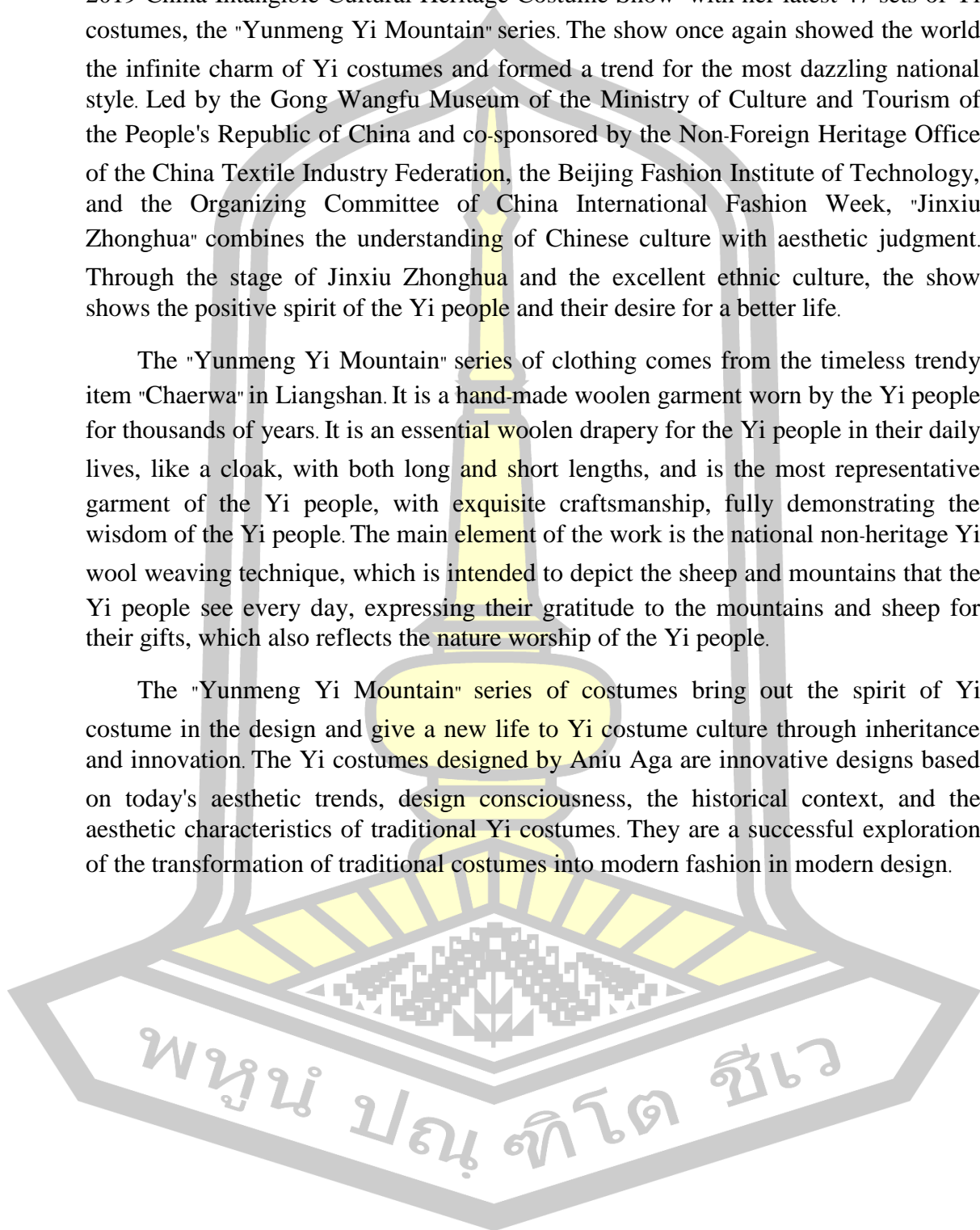




Figure 88 At the launch of "Yunmeng Yi Mountain," models demonstrated Yi costumes through a runway show, which brought Yi costumes to a higher international stage.

Source: Liangshan Daily News New Media Center, Ake Jiusi, Accessed 2019



Figure 89 At the launch of "Yunmeng Yi Mountain," the Yi costume represents the Yi people's identity and expresses itself to the outside world on an international stage.

Source: Liangshan Daily News New Media Center, Ake Jiusi, Accessed 2019

2.1.2 Establishment of Yi costumes Brand-Beijing Fashion Week

In order to promote the marketization and sustainable development of Yi costume derivative products, further enhance the popularity and influence of Liangshan Yi costume products, allow Liangshan Yi costume culture to directly serve poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, and promote flexible employment for women at home, in early 2020, the Beijing Institute of Fashion and the Liangshan Women's Federation reached a strategic cooperation through industry guidance, design assistance, the introduction of platform resources, etc. Promote the market transformation of Yi costume products and realize the inheritance and protection of Liangshan Yi costume culture. In September 2020, the designer brand of the Beijing Fashion Institute, together with the enterprises and inheritors of Liangshan Yi costumes, created more than 80 kinds of costumes, bags, jewelry, and other products with Yi embroidery, which were presented at Beijing Fashion Week in a new fashion posture. The launch of "Yi" New Style: Impression of the Yi Nationality in Non-Heritage Yi Embroidery Derivatives was successfully held. The launch aims to promote Yi traditional culture, respect Yi traditions, inherit Yi costume skills, and expand the consumer market. The products are inspired by Yi costumes, Yi silver ornaments, and traditional patterns on Yi architecture and are applied to common daily products by using the method of breaking up and reconstructing, which not only preserves the cultural characteristics of Yi but also realizes the market transformation of non-heritage derivatives, and each product contains the labor of Yi embroiderers.

Promoted by Liangshan Prefecture Women's Federation and Beijing Fashion Institute, designer brands from Beijing Fashion Institute actively engaged in this public service, from design assistance to product development, over a period of six months, and launched a series of fashion products that meet market demand, are close to life, and have distinct Yi characteristics by combining creative products with Yi embroidery, which embroiderers are good at. With Beijing Fashion Week's new product release as a starting point, the products will be pushed to consumer markets outside of the Yi region. This will increase production and consumption, create jobs and income for people in poor areas through Yi embroidery, and help them get out of poverty and move toward prosperity. The non-heritage derivatives of Liangshan will also get more attention from the whole society.

At this conference, four outstanding original brand designers from the Beijing Fashion Institute devoted themselves to creating Yi embroidery on non-heritage derivative products, presenting a visual feast of Yi culture.



Figure 90 "Yi Rhyme and New Style: Liangshan" works conference site, the combination of traditional Yi costumes and modern fashion, more professional designers to establish their own national brand, Yi costumes to reach a higher international stage.

Source: <https://www.qianlong.com> (February , 2023)

A. CHINAYI BRAND

"CHINAYI BRAND" is a social enterprise founded by Shama Youyou, an independent Yi designer in the Yi traditional culture preservation industry. The Yi brand redefines Yi traditional ethnic art with contemporary design language, based on knowledge of Yi traditional culture.

Starting from 2013, Shama Youyou visited 17 counties and cities in the Liangshan region, and through the investigation and collation of the current situation of Yi costume, it was found that Yi costume culture shows a strong vitality and that Yi costume culture is an important part of Yi culture, which has a profound influence in history. During the research period, the brand found that Yi costumes still have a wide consumer base today and also noted that Yi costume culture lacks systematic compilation in the process of historical inheritance. In 2016, the brand began to set up a brand database so that patterns and designs from some traditional costumes could be added to it.

The CHINAYI BRAND, with the niche and just-needed product Yi wedding dress as the core, builds an excellent national brand and lets the world see the Chinese Yi. In the context of consumer upgrading and internetization, the traditional brand building path, way, and method are facing a great challenge, and the brand has built a new brand system and building path because it makes the product, channel, and communication one with the concept of cultural IP.

CHINAYI BRAND has an independent art creation center, a non-heritage workshop, and a top supply chain system in China. Based on the non-heritage skills,

we promote the application of non-heritage skills in Yi clothing design and art projects, explore a new path of protection and inheritance of non-heritage, disseminate folk arts to the public through diversified channels, combine the strengths of multiple parties, recreate and redevelop them to become modern daily necessities, and derive a number of cultural and creative products and art projects with historical cultural heritage and contemporary cultural flavor. We will also showcase and disseminate the excellent achievements of original Chinese minority art to the international community and contribute to the development of Yi costume culture and the cultural industry.

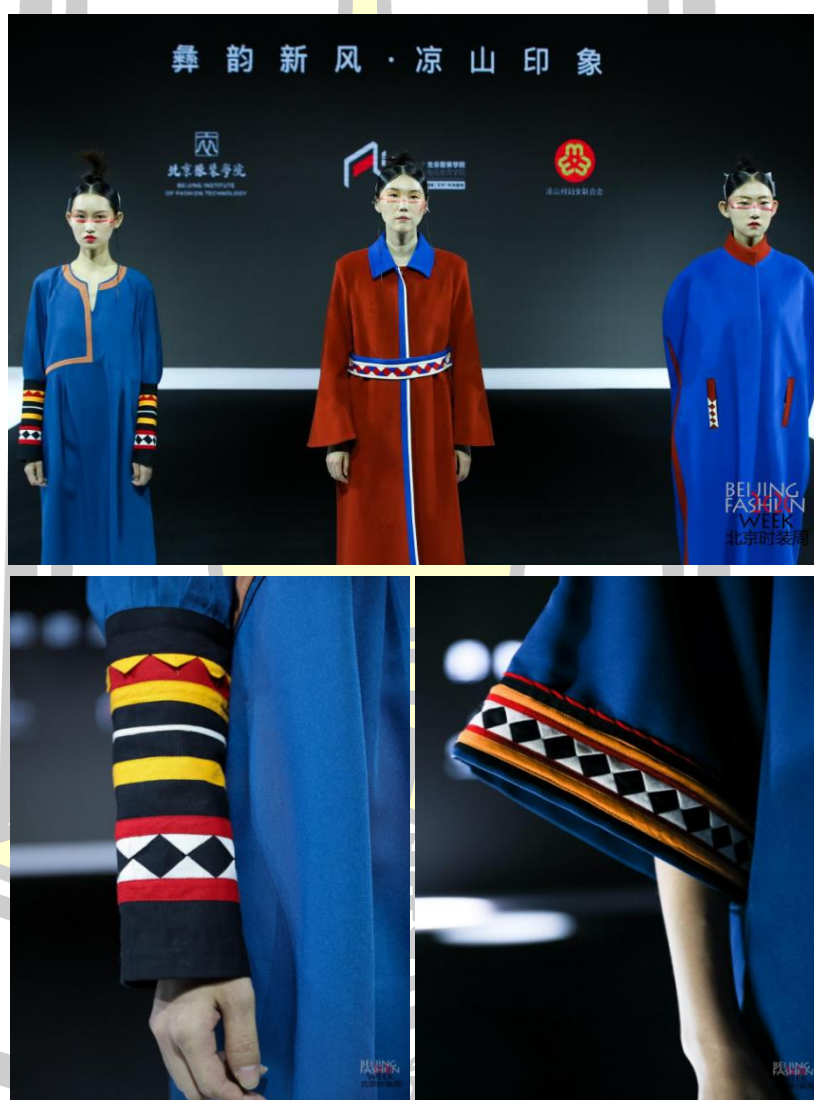


Figure 91 The horse tooth pattern, a typical pattern of traditional Yi costumes, is used in the costume design. The designer broke the conventional arrangement, deconstructed it with contemporary design language, reorganized it, and placed it in the current aesthetic, which is a dialogue between traditional skills and modern design, transforming the traditional Yi costume elements into modern innovation.

Source: <https://www.qianlong.com> (February , 2023)

B. YI JIAN ZHI WU

YI JIAN ZHI WU is an original design brand that blends ethnic art and trend, with exquisite design, passing aesthetics and culture from the fingertips of craftsmen to every inch of fabric, presenting contemporary people with fashionable clothes at first sight. YI JIAN ZHI WU brings together a group of designers with ideas who look for inspiration in the intersections of innovation and heritage, openness and self.



Figure 92 Black and white is the main color in the costume, which is the traditional classic color in Yi costume, and at the same time, the traditional Yi pattern is incorporated in the design. The simple and fashionable costume and the absorption and integration of Yi elements are loved by many young people.

Source: <https://www.qianlong.com> (February , 2023)

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C. JILLIN NICENESS

With "Yi cultural elements and Western geometric language" as the main design idea, the design makes good use of the unique Yi patterns and Western geometric elements to show the beauty of modern costumes.



Figure 93 The brand's designs are made up of traditional Yi patterns like fern, sunflower, and suoma flower, along with geometric shapes from the West. The intermingling of cultures has created a unique style characteristic.

Source: <https://www.qianlong.com> (February , 2023)

D. Red Hall Cheongsam

Built in 2007, Red Pavilion Cheongsam combines the cultural characteristics of Yi dress with the cheongsam that best shows women's softness, preserving the classic Yi elements while incorporating the traditional Chinese cheongsam elements, and redesigning the seemingly opposing characteristics of different dresses commercially. In terms of color, the classic Yi three primary colors of black, red, and yellow are chosen, and then the classic Yi ram's horn pattern is used as a pattern to match the cheongsam, showing the softness of women.



Figure 94 The model's long braided look is the everyday dress of a young girl of the Yi ethnic group, paired with a headband of the same material color as her costumes. In the Yi ethnic group, the red headband is a way for girls to express themselves.

Source: <https://www.qianlong.com> (February , 2023)

2.2 The Government Case for Modernity yi costumes

2.2.1 Government-School Partnership Development

In August 2017, commissioned by the cultural industry department of China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the research project team of the Academy of Fine Arts of Tsinghua University, China, on "Product and Talent Enhancement in the Special Cultural Industry" conducted a series of studies on how to further promote the construction of the "Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor." The project team conducted a series of studies on how to further promote the construction of the "Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Cultural Industry Corridor", investigating and demonstrating the possibility of carrying out major projects in the special cultural industry. In the first phase, the project team conducted an in-depth study of the Yi costume industry in Liangshan and Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture and produced a research report on the development of the Yi costume industry.

In September 2017, in order to promote the inheritance of traditional Yi costume crafts and the development of the Yi costume industry, the government of Liangshan Prefecture cooperated with the Academy of Fine Arts of Tsinghua University to carry out the project "Research on the fashionable design and application of Yi costume in modern life" and conduct relevant basic research, design research and development,

and results. The project will help Liangshan Prefecture develop and incubate innovative Yi costumes.

Based on today's design context, aesthetic trends, and market environment, the Yi Costume Group at the Academy of Fine Arts, Tsinghua University, China, explores the innovative development path of ethnic costumes based on the transformation of the aesthetic qualities of Yi traditional costumes into fashion in modern life. After nearly a year of fieldwork, cultural research, and innovative design work on Yi costumes, the group fully analyzed the characteristics and symbolic meanings of Yi costume pattern elements, explored the aesthetic implications of Yi costume elements, researched and designed a series of modern Yi costumes that were rich in ethnic characteristics and fashion sense, and showed them at the opening event of Beijing International Design Week 2018. In September 2018, as the opening finale of Beijing International Design Week 2018, the "2018 Nonfiction Fashion Extravaganza Out of Liangshan: Yi Traditional Costume and Modern Innovative Design Special Launch" was successfully held in Beijing, China. The clothes innovatively designed by the Yi costume group led by Professor Li Yingjun from the Department of Fashion Art and Design of the Tsinghua Academy of Fine Arts presented a visual feast of Yi costume culture and innovation together with the Yi traditional costume show brought by the Liangshan Prefecture ethnic performance team.

The launch was presented at the China Millennium Forum, giving full play to the cultural characteristics of the Yi people, who can sing and dance, integrating Yi costumes with Yi music, dance, traditional festivals, and folk customs, and bringing the Yi costume culture inherited for thousands of years to the international stage.

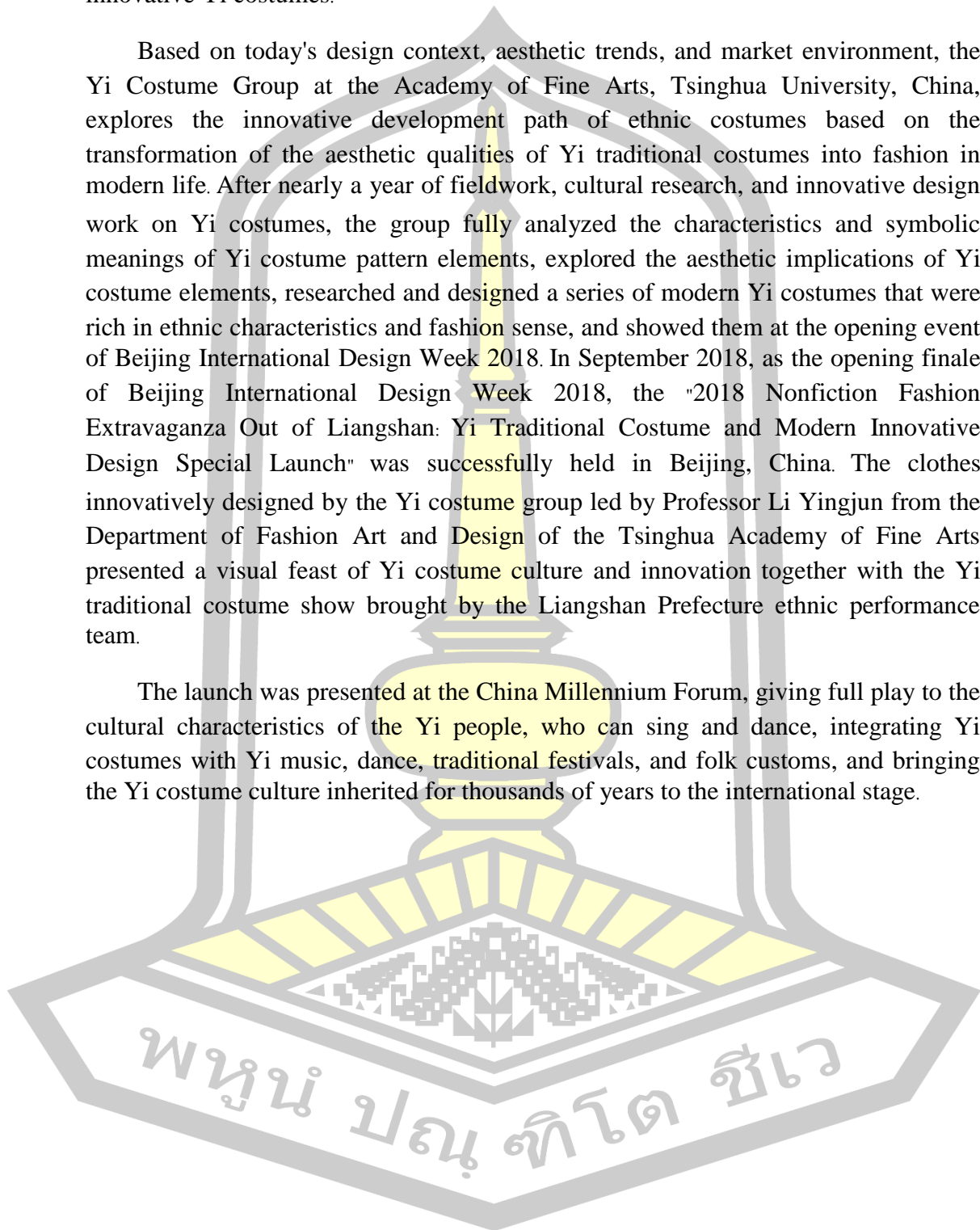




Figure 95 The Yi people wear traditional Yi costumes to construct their ethnic identity, present their culture to outside groups, and engage in self-expression.
Source: Humanities Tsinghua Lecture Theatre, Wang Yuge, Accessed 2018



Figure 96 The models walked the runway wearing Yi costumes with modern elements. The fusion of traditional and modern elements made the Yi costumes more diverse and fashionable.

Source: Humanities Tsinghua Lecture Theatre, Wang Yuge, Accessed 2018



Figure 97 Professor Li Yingjun and his team at China's Tsinghua University have put Yi costume elements into modern design ideas. This lets the spiritual meanings of Yi costumes come through in the designs and gives Yi costume culture a new lease on life by combining tradition and innovation.

Source: Humanities Tsinghua Lecture Theatre, Wang Yuge, Accessed 2018

In this grand show, tradition and modernity were reflected in each other, presenting a Yi costume show full of national charm to nearly 1,000 domestic and foreign guests, including ambassadors and representatives of international design organizations on the scene. The show was broadcast and reported on by CCTV, Beijing TV, Xinhua, and other major media outlets, causing widespread attention and lively discussions in the industry. The costume designs in this conference are based on today's aesthetic trends, design awareness, and the historical background of the times. They explore the fashion transformation in modern design based on the aesthetic performance characteristics of traditional Liangshan Yi costumes, thus seeking a reliable development path for the innovative development of Yi costumes.

2.2.2 Liangshan Yi costumes Professional Cooperative

The Liangshan Yi Costumes Professional Cooperative was established in July 2021 by the Liangshan Women's Federation under the guidance of five outstanding embroiderers in the Liangshan region at the Xichang City Non-Foreign Heritage Workshop. As an operation platform, the cooperative systematically trains embroiderers' embroidery skills, undertakes hand embroidery orders of a certain scale, justly distributes embroiderers' orders, scientifically prices processing and production fees in the market, and adopts the operation model of "training, orders, distribution, labor" to realize the development idea of integrated operation and achieve a

sustainable and stable income for embroiderers. The company has adopted the operation model of "training, order, distribution, and labor" to realize the idea of an integrated operation and achieve a sustainable and stable income for embroiderers.

In 2022, a new Yi costume conference was successfully concluded during Beijing Fashion Week. Promoted by the government of Liangshan Prefecture and Beijing Fashion Institute, the conference was organized and executed by the School of Continuing Education of Beijing Fashion Institute and the Federation of Liangshan Prefecture Women's Federation, which jointly invited industry designers to actively participate in this public welfare design support activity. The designers worked for half a year, after field research and design creation, to combine traditional patterns on Yi clothing, silver jewelry, lacquerware, and Yi architecture with hand embroidery by embroiderers to jointly create a variety of clothing with distinctive Yi clothing characteristics. The launch is rooted in respecting the traditional Yi culture, carrying forward the charm of Yi totem art and inheriting Yi embroidery skills while focusing on modern aesthetic and practical functional needs as the goal, and presenting a visual feast of Yi culture for the mass market.

The cooperative gives full play to the advantages of its platform and gradually introduces excellent designer brands from various industries, including WENLEI, MEET MARCH, YIZHEN ATELIER, SIMPLE & COMPLETE, and YIJIANZHIWU, to jointly create diversified Yi clothing products. The cooperative will launch a series of non-traditional derivative products that integrate Yi clothing embroidery elements with modern fashion elements and bring them to the market through e-commerce, physical stores, and distribution. Based on the inheritance and protection of Yi costume culture, the cooperative actively plays the role of a platform to lead the Yi people to start their own businesses and achieve employment and income by their own hands, which promotes the development of the regional economy.

A. WENLEI

Lei Wenwen, an independent Chinese designer, upholds the idea of injecting fresh blood into traditional non-heritage crafts by combining oriental elements with western culture, both classical and traditional, while also incorporating the idea of future innovation. The beauty of non-heritage should not only be displayed in museums but also be worn by people as everyday clothing.



Figure 98 The shape and color combination of the costume is inspired by the mountains and nature of the Liangshan region, retaining the traditional characteristics of Yi costumes while incorporating modern elements to make the costume shape more fashionable and modern.

Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion, Ma Jincheng , Accessed 2022

B. MEET MARCH

Hu Xingyue Born into a family of tailors, her grandmother and mother were both excellent seamstresses, making her the third generation of the family. Having grown up with a love for Chinese costumes and embroidery, she founded her independent designer brand, "Meet March," in 2017. The brand's design is inspired by the mysterious oriental culture and aesthetics, and it is good at harmoniously integrating various fashion elements into Chinese dress design. The original intention was to "insist on the temperature of handmade customization," and the design concept is "the best inheritance is innovation."



Figure 99 With red, blue, black, and white as the main colors and fire as the main element in the design, symbolizing the Yi people's worship of fire, the material is mainly wool and silk, the overall quality is enhanced, and the style is atmospheric and simple.

Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion, Ma Jincheng , Accessed 2022

C. YIZHEN ATELIER

The YIZHEN ATELIER brand was founded in 2018 by Yang Ting, who graduated from the University of the Arts London. Influenced by the dress code of gentlemen, she proposed the concept of "the female gentleman" and incorporated it into the brand's costume design, bringing a new dress concept to modern women. YIZHEN ATELIER's extraordinary heritage is reflected in its emotional power and raw energy, as well as in its deep respect for the traditions of art and craftsmanship. with perfect tailoring, impeccable craftsmanship, and detailing to create the image of a refined lady.



Figure 100 The YIZHEN ATELIER clothes are made of imported fabrics from Europe and fused with the intangible cultural heritage of China-Yi embroidery. The centuries-old handmade suit craft fused with the thousand-year-old handmade Yi embroidery collide with new sparks, bringing the intangible cultural heritage into life and into fashion on a broader stage. The combination of traditional craftsmanship and modern patterns brings Yi clothing culture closer to the public and gives the clothing a deeper cultural heritage.

Source: Beijing Institute of Fashion, Ma Jincheng , Accessed 2022

In order to promote the marketization and sustainable development of Yi costume derivative products, further enhance the popularity and influence of Yi costume products, allow Yi costume culture to directly serve rural revitalization, and promote the flexible employment of women at home, the training center of the Beijing Institute of Fashion was listed and established in 2021 in the non-heritage workshop of Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, forming Yi costume training and teaching, industry support, and through industry experts' guidance, product design upgrade, platform resource introduction, etc., to promote the market transformation of Liangshan Yi costume products and realize the inheritance and protection of Liangshan Yi costume culture and In early 2022, the government of Liangshan Prefecture and the Beijing Institute of Fashion reached an agreement on the above cooperation matters and held the launch of the professional cooperative of Liangshan Yi costumes in Beijing. with the goal of promoting rural revitalization economic development, developing rural industry, the Yi costume industry, integrating Yi costume culture into modern life, and achieving a win-win situation of Yi costume inheritance and protection and industrialization development. The success of this

conference means that Liangshan Yi costume products will take Beijing Fashion Week as the starting point for dissemination and push Yi culture and Yi costume products to the consumer market outside the Yi region, driving more social attention and mass consumption. The success of the conference has enhanced the communication power of Liangshan Yi costumes, stimulated market sales, promoted the development of the Yi costume industry, inspired Yi costume practitioners to focus on the cause of Yi costumes, laid a foundation for the subsequent introduction of professional design teams, promoted platform resources, helped the transformation of traditional craft achievements and innovation development in Liangshan, enhanced the competitiveness of the Yi costume market, and promoted Yi costumes to a larger international stage.

2.2.3 Liangshan International Yi Torch Festival

Liangshan International Torch Festival is a traditional festival held in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. It usually takes place on June 24th of the lunar calendar. During the festival, people dress in traditional Yi costumes and carry torches to walk around the villages, burning the torches to pray for good luck and a good harvest. The Liangshan International Torch Festival is not only an important cultural event for the Yi people but also attracts many tourists to come and watch and experience the celebration.

The Torch Festival originated from the Yi people's worship of fire, which was expected to be used to drive away insects and protect crops. On the day of the Torch Festival, the Liangshan Yi people put on their festive costumes, sing and dance, and hold loud beauty pageants and competitions such as wrestling and archery.

In order to publicize the rich cultural resources of the Yi Torch Festival, expand the influence of Yi Torch Festival culture, and publicize and build the cultural brand of the Torch Festival, the government of Liangshan Prefecture established the Torch Festival as a legal holiday with a 5-day holiday, held the "China Xichang International Yi Torch Festival" regularly every year, and invited guests from all over the world to attend the festival. The festival is held regularly every year.

Under the promotion of relevant policies, the scale of the festival celebrations and activities of the International Yi Torch Festival has been significantly increased, and the level of the festival and the content of the festival activities have been greatly enriched and expanded, adding traditional folk celebrations, guest participation, and tourist participation. The International Torch Festival Organizing Committee, according to the characteristics of the torch festival, has increased the cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage items, the skills of the inheritors to demonstrate, etc. The traditional Yi culture and arts, costumes, athletic entertainment, and other items are explored and displayed, performed, competed for, and inherited for

exchange during the festival. It has built the brand of the Liangshan International Yi Torch Festival.

In recent years, the torch festival has attracted more and more attention. Among the many activities, the most popular one among the guests from various countries is the Yi traditional beauty contest, which is scored according to the criteria of delicate features and proportionate body shape and also has high requirements for the participants' Yi traditional costumes, which are a converging display of the Yi costume culture in Liangshan.

During the Torch Festival, many domestic and foreign tourists come to the beauty pageant to see the handsome and beautiful Yi men and women. During the beauty pageant, an eye-catching and innovative Yi costume is indispensable for both men and women. In every beauty pageant, a batch of new Yi costumes that have never been seen before will appear in front of people's eyes, and the style of the set of costumes that won the best costume award that year will definitely form a popular clothing trend, thus making the tourism and economic value of the costume industry increasingly prominent.

The innovative pageant costumes represent a breakthrough in the traditional three primary colors, making the colors more diversified. Styles of clothing are no longer limited to the traditional pleated skirt. Instead, there is a bold transformation design that shows off each person's uniqueness. On the pageant stage, it is no longer all traditional pageant costumes as before, and the audience can increasingly accept such changes and innovations. There is a distinction between traditional and innovative Yi beauty pageant costumes, which differ greatly in color, material, and production methods. Traditional pageant costumes are still colored in the traditional red, black, and yellow colors and are made of wool, cotton, or linen. In terms of production methods, they are generally hand-loomed and embroidered. The innovative beauty pageant costumes deviate from the traditional three-color scheme and are more distinctive in terms of materials, which are not limited to cotton and linen. In terms of processing methods, a combination of mechanical and manual production is used to make the clothes. In general, innovative pageant costumes are the continuation and evolution of traditional type costumes, while also retaining elements of traditional type costumes, so that the innovative pageant costumes are more in line with modern aesthetic vision.

With the continuous development of society, the style and tone of pageant costumes were innovated and improved, and corresponded to the openness of the times, changing towards the goal of naturalness, simplicity, and harmony, becoming more exquisite and contemporary from the previous heavy. At the same time, along

with the costume innovation, the event site provides costume sales and rental services for visitors to the pageant, so that they can buy or rent Yi costumes for a photo-taking experience, and there are also many small commodities with costume cultural characteristics around the event, such as bookmarks, cell phone cases, calendars, etc., as branded tourist souvenirs, thus making Yi costume culture economically valuable.

The Yi Torch Festival has a long history, a wide mass base, wide coverage, and a far-reaching influence. The torch festival fully embodies the Yi people's worship of fire and preserves ancient information about the origin and development of the Yi people, which has important historical and scientific values. It also serves as a vehicle for traditional Yi cultural elements such as music, dance, and food. At the same time, the traditional beauty pageant costumes in the Torch Festival are an important part of the ethnic culture, with rich cultural connotations and exquisite craftsmanship. Nowadays, the pageant costumes on display at the International Torch Festival inherit and carry forward the characteristics of traditional pageant costumes while also creating innovative designs based on good traditions. Today's young generation is no longer bound by traditional ideas but prefers to choose costumes that are practical, simple, and fashionable. Bold improvements are made to the traditional Yi costume to adapt it to the needs of modern people. Innovative clothing has enriched the pageant costumes, allowing the Yi costume culture to evolve and move to a higher international stage.



Figure 101 The traditional beauty pageant dresses are still colored with the traditional red, black, and yellow colors. They are also made of wool, cotton, or linen and are generally hand-loomed and embroidered. A pageant site is an important place for the outside world to learn about Yi traditional costumes.

Source: The scene of Liangshan International Torch Festival Beauty Pageant,
Photo :Ding Xuerui , 2022



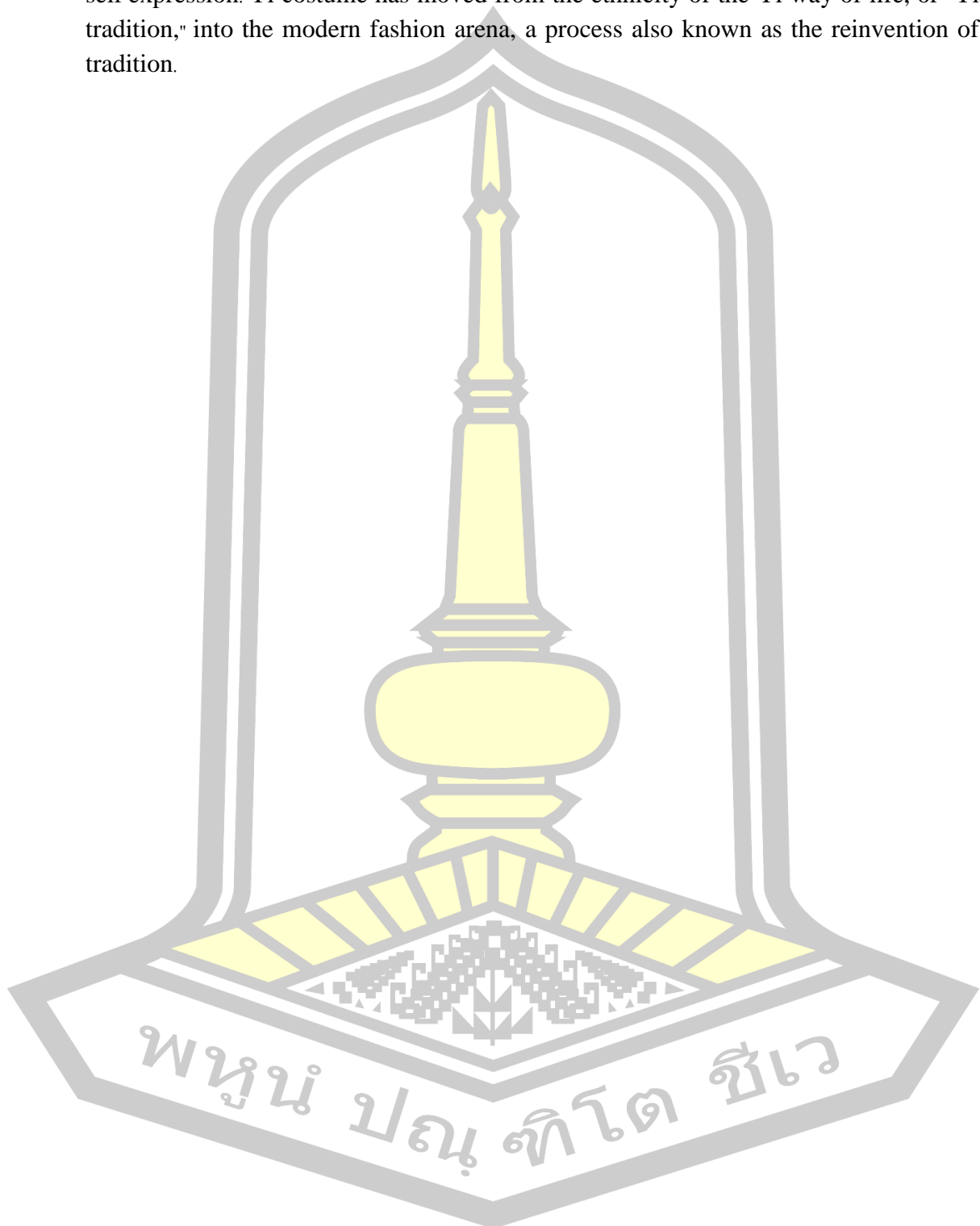
Figure 102 Innovative selection of beauty apparel breaks through the red, yellow and blue-based traditional way, in the choice of materials is not limited to cotton and linen and other materials, the integration of drape better silk and other fabrics, in the processing method, the combination of mechanical production and manual production, the integration of modern fashion elements, expanding more consumer groups.

Source: PaBi Apparel, Western China International Fashion Week, Accessed 2022.

Conclusion

In a modern context, traditional Yi costume are reinterpreted and incorporated into contemporary fashion designs. The unique vibrant colors, bold patterns, and intricate embroidery of Yi costume are adapted into unique and fashionable clothing pieces that reflect both traditional heritage and modern aesthetics. Modern fashion has influenced Yi costume, and the fusion of traditional elements with modern design has produced unique and fashionable garments that reflect both the past and the present. In the process of commercializing Yi costume, Yi people have become connected to the outside world, and designers, artisans, and models have redesigned and reworked Yi costume to become a modern fashion that has spread to a larger world stage. This fashion combines consumer history, tradition, and modern elements to connect

outsiders to Yi costume culture, which is a way for Yi people to use Yi costumes for self-expression. Yi costume has moved from the ethnicity of the Yi way of life, or "Yi tradition," into the modern fashion arena, a process also known as the reinvention of tradition.



CHAPTER VI

Research Summary, Discussion and Suggestion

Research Summary

The research is a basic research, topic of “Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a Minority in the Context of Modernity” The research population is the Yi people, a minority in Liangshan Province, China. Importantly, their costumes can identify cultural identity in ethnicity context and connect with outsiders in modern context. It reflects the large issues in society and academic circle.

This research uses qualitative research methods. Data collection is emphasis on fieldwork by observation and interviewing key informants, including documentary collection. There are two main concepts: Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation. There are 4 research objectives: 1) To study the historical development of Yi people at Liangshan, Prefecture, Sichuan Province 2) To study Yi's costumes in the dimension of ethnicity and material culture 3) To Study Yi's costume in the dimension of commoditization and 4) To study modern fashion from Yi's costumes in the context of modernity. The research results are as follows.

1. Historical development of Yi people at Liangshan Province

The Yi minority is one of the oldest ethnic groups in China. Yi consisted of three sub-clans, they settled in Liangshan Province, located in the southwestern part of China's Sichuan Province. As one of China's oldest ethnic minorities, it maintains a rich and colorful ethnic culture. Especially is the dress culture. Yi is in a unique social and historical geographical and humanist environment. and with its unique geographical location long historical heritage and religious worship in the primeval era They have created their own unique ethnic regional culture. This regional culture has led to the formation of special Yi costumes. which has become a symbol of the identity of Yi people.

The Yi people and cultural societies in the Liangshan region are related to the geography, settlement, and historical and socio-cultural contexts of each period from the past to the present. The environment and cultural traditions have affected "Yi people's costumes." The Yi costume has unique characteristics. Such Yi clothing is therefore a cultural object that indicates their ethnicity very well. At the same time, the ethnicity of Yi people is important for defining the local identity of Liangshan.

The social and cultural history of the Yi people explores the achievements of the Yi people from their origins to the modern Yi people in various periods of time and different social contexts, and also sees the process by which the Yi people construct their ethnic identity through the use of their own clothing. The environment and cultural traditions have influenced the development and changes of Yi dress, giving it a unique character, and this particular form of using dress has allowed outside groups to begin to understand the rich and colorful ethnic culture of Liangshan Prefecture.

Thence, the Yi costume has been an important factor in shaping the characteristics of the region, city, and Yi communities from past to present. Which I will present in the next chapters in my research.

2. Yi's costumes in the dimension of the ethnicity and material culture

Liangshan Yi costume is the costume of the Yi people, the largest minority group in the Liangshan region of Sichuan Province, China, and it is a material culture that expresses the unique national cultural identity of this people.

The distinctive dialectal division of Liangshan Prefecture has created regional differences in costumes. The styles, patterns, colors, and styles of costumes in the three dialectal regions are distinctive and clearly distinguishable, and the Yi people can often tell which region an outsider comes from by his or her costume. The Yi people wear different Yi costumes for different ceremonies, festivals, daily life, and special life, while different levels, ages, and occupations of the Yi people have strict instructions on how to wear their costumes and accessories. This special use of clothing creates a special national identity for the Yi people, who express who they are and what distinguishes them from others through their clothing. Through dress, outsiders see the unique national identity of the Yi people.

The Yi people's use of costumes in daily life and special ceremonies is a way to maintain their ethnicity. Yi costume, as the material culture of the Yi people, the largest minority group in China, shows us that Yi costume is not only a mere material form, but also a symbol of national identity, from the production, craft, color and pattern of the costume. Behind the costumes are the religious beliefs, nature worship and profound cultural and historical connotations of the Yi people, a sense of identification and belonging to their own ethnic identity.

Therefore Yi's costume is reflecting cultural material very well.

3. Yi's costume in the dimension of commoditization

In the context of modernity, there are many policies that encourage ethnic minorities to display and express their culture to the outside world, so that it can

become cultural capital and be used to develop products and generate income. In this context, the Yi people have become associated with the outside world, and they express their ethnic identity through the use of costumes. In the process of expression, they reap the benefits of cultural tourism and creative products, reflecting a reinvention of tradition, which refers to the ethnic identity of the Yi people, which has been created along with the use of costumes and has been passed on to the present day. Reinvention means that in the process of inheritance and use, what was originally an item for daily wear by the Yi people internally has now become a commodity for trade between the Yi people and outsiders, and the production process, production methods, and the properties, functions, and meanings of the product itself have all changed in order to be sold to outsiders, which is reinvention. In the process of commercialization, Yi costumes have become a kind of cultural capital, and the local people have demonstrated and expressed their culture to the outside world through sales, production, and cultural tourism, thus gaining revenue and promoting the economic development of the Liangshan region.

4. Yi's costumes in the dimension of modern fashion

Modernization in China has many stages. For modernity in research, this means modernity that affects social change. This is a result of economic development in relation to social development to connect with the world widely since 2000 onwards. Thence, the period of Western Development following 2000, the Chinese government implemented numerous policies to promote the development of ethnic minorities in the Liangshan region, resulting in the region's modernization. Modernity in the Liangshan region is a continuous process of transformation from the existing civilization to a more advanced one. In modern society, a streamlined lifestyle has slowly permeated the ethnic minorities, and new ideas have gradually replaced the complicated and cumbersome ethnic clothing with fashionable, simple, and inexpensive clothing. In order to meet market demand, Yi costumes are made in a way that meets the aesthetic needs of modern people, highlights modernity, and inherits and carries forward the essence of traditional Yi costume culture. In the context of modernity, there are many professional designers who have established their own brands of ethnic costumes, so that the fabrics used to make Yi costumes gradually tend to be more diversified, the patterns are more fashionable and decorated, the styles of costumes are more abundant, the application fields are expanding, and the consumer groups are gradually expanding.

In the process of commercializing Yi costumes, Yi people become connected to the outside world, and designers, artisans, and models redesign and rework Yi costumes to become modern fashion that spreads to a larger world stage. This fashion combines consumer history, tradition, and modern elements to connect outsiders to Yi costume culture, which is a way for Yi people to express themselves through Yi costumes. Yi costumes have moved from the ethnicity of the Yi way of life, or "Yi tradition," into the modern fashion arena, a process also known as the reinvention of tradition.

Research Discussion

The research of "Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China : Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a Minority in the Context of Modernity" aims to study the relationship between "Costume" as a Material Culture of Yi, an Ethnic Group in Liangshan, which still retains its clothing form as a cultural object. At the same time, their cultural objects have connected them with outsiders. The Yi minority has been taking their costumes showing off their identity to others in an interesting way. Therefore, the results can be discussed in two parts: 1) The costume of Yi group as material culture and 2) The elevation of the concepts used in the study, Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation as follows:

1. Yi's costume as the material culture

1.1 Material culture in the context of the ethnicity of Yi people

This research shows knowledge paradigm and generation through their relationship with the people and society involved. Therefore, Yi people's costume has the status of "Material culture". Yi's outfit in the cultural object dimension has made the researcher understand and discover a new set of knowledge that The beautiful and unique fabrics and costume designs of the Yi minority group not caused by the skill of local artists But it is caused by the construction of related cultural traditions. From birth to death, it also deals with the conditions of the terrain, seasons, daily life and life in the various ritual traditions of the Yi people.

In my discussion, I have presented the most important phenomena are follow:

The traditional Yi occupation of "Bimo" is that of a specialized Yi folk priest who plays an important role in traditional Yi weddings, funerals, and rituals. Bimo is generally passed down from family to family and only to men. When performing puja, Bimo wears a specific vestment, which is a symbol of "magic power". The costume of Bimo is a kind of special cloak, with hats, accessories, and other sets. There are several kinds of wool cloaks, silk cloaks, and cotton linen cloaks, and there are two colors: yellow and red. They wear yellow for funeral rituals, red for wedding

ceremonies, and a cloak made of horsetail hair for ancestral rituals, which is woven with horse's tail hair and is black and shiny, making it the best Yi costume. Bimo's costume, which the general public cannot just wear or even touch, is only worn by Bimo when performing rituals and is passed down from generation to generation.

In the most grand funeral ceremony of the Yi people, the unique sense of life and beliefs of the Yi people are enshrined. The Yi people believe that the soul of a person still exists after death and that the deceased person should wear new clothes to meet the ancestors. The clothes worn must be recognized by the ancestors in order to be accepted into the clan, so the clothes worn should be mainly blue and green, and red and yellow clothes should not be worn. The Yi people who come to Yi funerals wear their grandest costumes to the funeral ceremony to show their worship and respect for their ancestors.

Therefore, Yi costume is not just a mere material but a precious material culture, which is created by the collective and directly related to the life and society of Yi people.

1.2 Material culture in the context of the Modernity of China

As I have shown, the costumes of the Yi people directly relate to the life and society of the Yi people. Therefore, after China has developed the country in the context of economic reform. It has resulted in Chinese society entering an era of modernity that connects with the international world. In the context of modernity, There are two important factors for society.

1.2.1 The first factor is the Chinese government policy that wants minorities to develop themselves through their cultural identity. In this regard, it had an important effect on the revival of the Yi people's customs and clothing. In addition, it has also influenced the culture of dressing as a commodity of commoditization.

This part of there are important phenomena as follow:

The rapid development of tourism in the Liangshan region has provided an opportunity for the commercialization of Yi costume. In this context, some Yi costume enterprises with production scale and production technology have begun to emerge, and these enterprises have adopted modern production processes and management modes and laid the foundation for the commercialization of Yi costume through brand building and product innovation.

The Liangshan Prefecture government invests millions of dollars each year in basic Yi costume craftsmanship training and has initially established a number of large-scale Yi costume production facilities and production teams, as well as intangible cultural heritage poverty alleviation workshops, costume and embroidery industry bases, and the Liangshan Prefecture Yi embroidery and costume exhibition

hall. In addition, Liangshan Prefecture has implemented the development strategy of "Territorial Tourism", accelerated the integration of tourism and industries, including traditional handicrafts, created a number of excellent music, film, and television works to promote Yi costumes during the annual festivals of "Torch Festival" and "Yi Year", and yi costume into cultural and creative products and tourist souvenirs. Therefore, in this process, Yi costumes also reflect the phenomenon of reinvention of tradition in three aspects: first, originally, only Yi people could design and make Yi costumes, but now people from other ethnic groups, countries, and regions who are interested in Yi costumes can learn to make Yi costumes. The second aspect is that originally, the Yi costumes were for the daily wear of internal Yi people, but now, non-Yi people can also wear Yi costumes. The third aspect is that the Yi costume has been processed and designed from the original costume into a fashionable costume.

1.2.2 Secondly, the connection with the international fashion world. From the context of modernity, in addition to the revival of the traditional dress of Yi, which a special artistic effect on Yi's costumes has resulted in the creative imagination of modern fashion designers. Therefore, in the modernity pushes the Yi's costumes into the modern fashion arena gracefully.

In this section, there are important phenomenon as follow:

Since 2000, many professional designers have joined the Liangshan Yi costume industry, and national costume brands have been created at home and abroad. Designers have explored the similarities between Liangshan Yi costumes and modern costume design and the method of combining national costume culture with modern fashion. We use contemporary design concepts to integrate the ethnic elements of traditional Yi costumes into modern life and design new styles and patterns. As a result, the fabrics, colors, patterns, and styles of Yi clothing have been chosen to be closer to the aesthetics of today's consumers, and the unique colors, exquisite patterns, and complex embroidery of Yi costume have been adapted into unique and fashionable costume pieces with a unique modern appearance. And with the promotion of relevant policies, modern and fashionable Yi costumes have been presented by models and international stars on international stages such as Beijing Fashion Week, Paris Fashion Week, and the Liangshan International Torch Festival and have been recognized and loved by people all over the world.

Thus, from the foregoing, in the context of Ethnicity, Yi's costume indicates the important findings concerning the clothing of the Yi people that It is an artistic phenomenon created by cultural relations and interactions, it is not from one mechanic. So, understanding Yi's costume phenomenon must also be understood through a social context.

2.The Yi's costumes and the elevation of Ethnic Identity and self-representation

As my presented in Part 1, Yi's costume is the material culture. "Yi Costumes at Liangshan, China: Ethnic Identity and Self-Representation of a Minority in the Context of Modernity" is the first research to study the costumes of Yi people by explaining them through the main concepts of ethnicity, Ethnic-identity and self-representation. So the research resulting from both concepts has expanded the borders of knowledge and academic issues. It is a phenomenon caused by "inter-ethnic relations" and "interaction with others" under modernity. The new findings of research are about ethnic characteristics in a modern context that do not exist in isolation from the outside world. Here is the modern both of these parts. There are relationships and interactions, and everyone always encourages each other.

Importantly, in the present context, "Ethnicity" cannot be separated from "Modernity". The two parts are interdependently related. And these two parts are truly the structure of "Material Culture" in today's world.

Research Suggestion

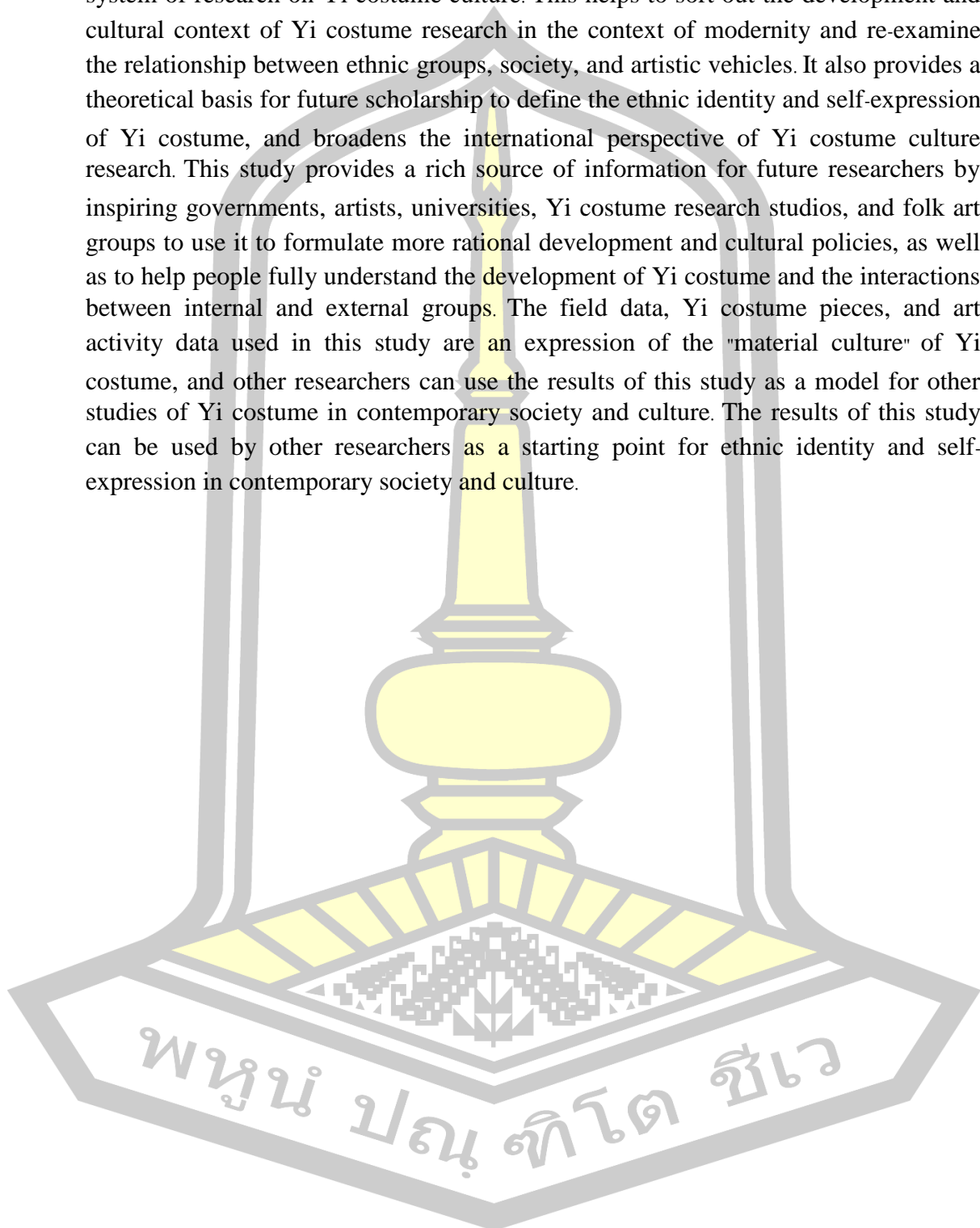
1. Suggestion to academic circle

From this study, it is clear that artists and researchers should reconsider their research on Yi costume culture in light of its relationship to social context. The new research perspective will allow us to see the inherent relationship between Yi dress and Yi people and other community groups, as well as the relationship between Yi dress and various social classes in the context of Chinese modernity. The concept is then applied to explain the "material culture" embedded in Yi dress. According to this study, the origin and transmission of Yi dress are part of the cultural identity of the Yi people, not an isolated cultural phenomenon within their system but an artistic phenomenon influenced by human and social influences.

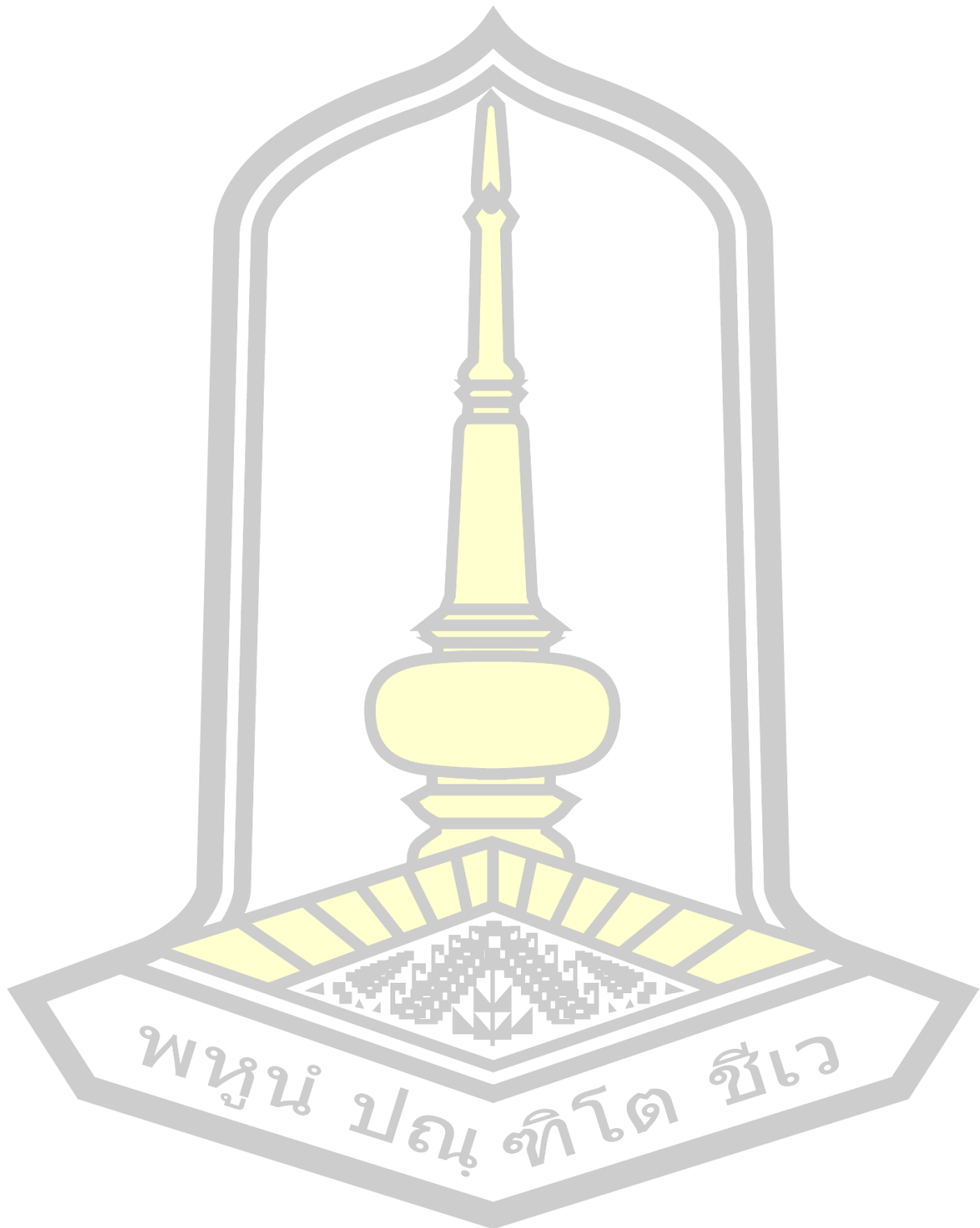
The researchers have proposed new research topics for the academic community, and in their research they have also found many other interesting research topics in the field of Yi costume research. For example, examine the historical and cultural roots of Yi costumes, including how they have changed over time and their role in Yi ethnic identity. Explore outside perceptions and evaluations of Yi costumes, including those of tourists and collectors, and the impact of such perceptions on the preservation and development of Yi costume traditions. Comparing Yi costumes with those of other ethnic groups in China and abroad to understand the similarities and differences in their social and cultural functions, among other studies, will be very helpful for the development of Yi costumes.

2. Other Suggestion

This study uses the ideas of "ethnic identity" and "self-expression" to set up a new system of research on Yi costume culture. This helps to sort out the development and cultural context of Yi costume research in the context of modernity and re-examine the relationship between ethnic groups, society, and artistic vehicles. It also provides a theoretical basis for future scholarship to define the ethnic identity and self-expression of Yi costume, and broadens the international perspective of Yi costume culture research. This study provides a rich source of information for future researchers by inspiring governments, artists, universities, Yi costume research studios, and folk art groups to use it to formulate more rational development and cultural policies, as well as to help people fully understand the development of Yi costume and the interactions between internal and external groups. The field data, Yi costume pieces, and art activity data used in this study are an expression of the "material culture" of Yi costume, and other researchers can use the results of this study as a model for other studies of Yi costume in contemporary society and culture. The results of this study can be used by other researchers as a starting point for ethnic identity and self-expression in contemporary society and culture.



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Interview key informants

A Xi Wuzhimo, personal communication, 28th January 2023, interviewed by Ding Xuerui

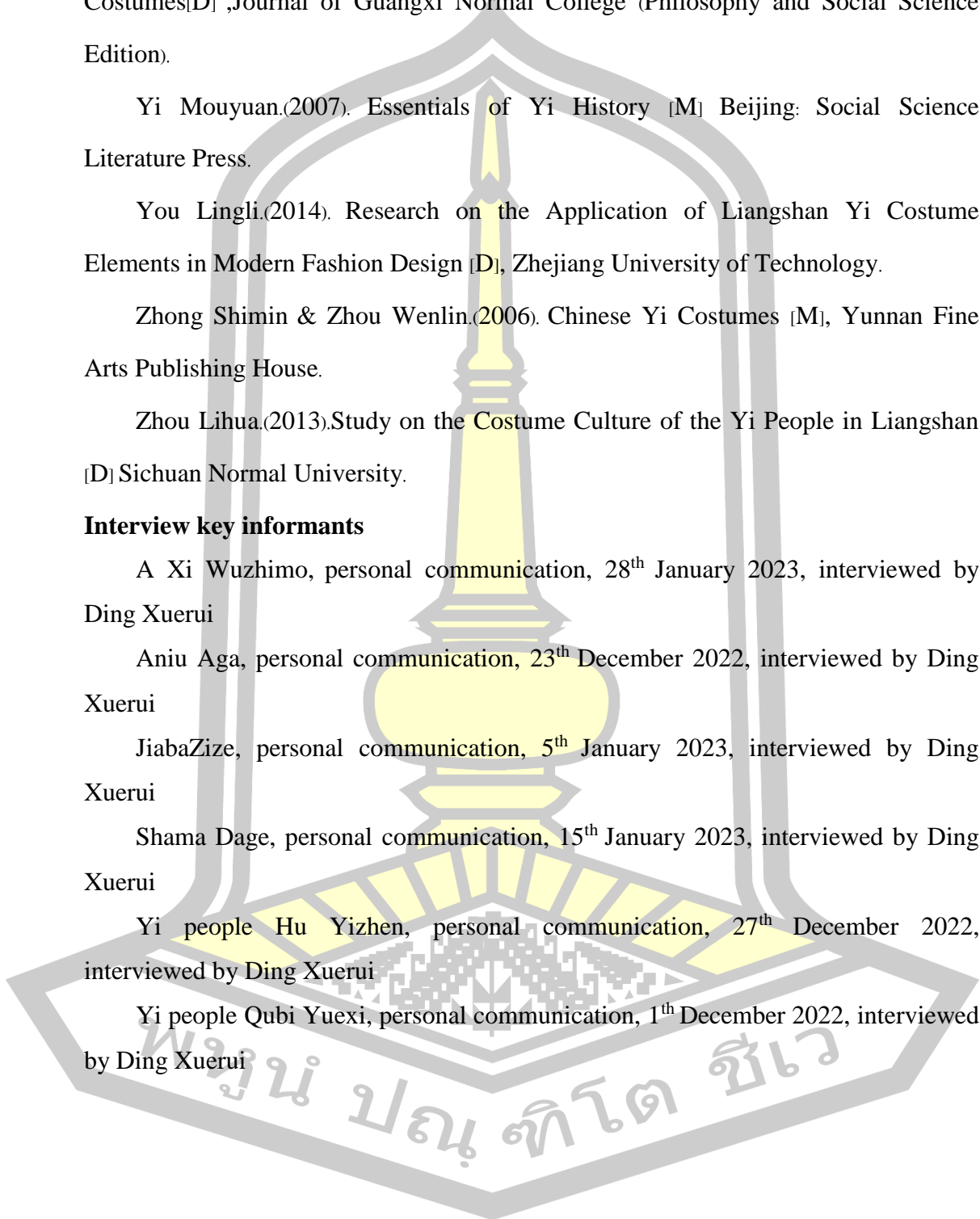
Aniu Aga, personal communication, 23th December 2022, interviewed by Ding Xuerui

JiabaZize, personal communication, 5th January 2023, interviewed by Ding Xuerui

Shama Dage, personal communication, 15th January 2023, interviewed by Ding Xuerui

Yi people Hu Yizhen, personal communication, 27th December 2022, interviewed by Ding Xuerui

Yi people Qubi Yuexi, personal communication, 1th December 2022, interviewed by Ding Xuerui



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