



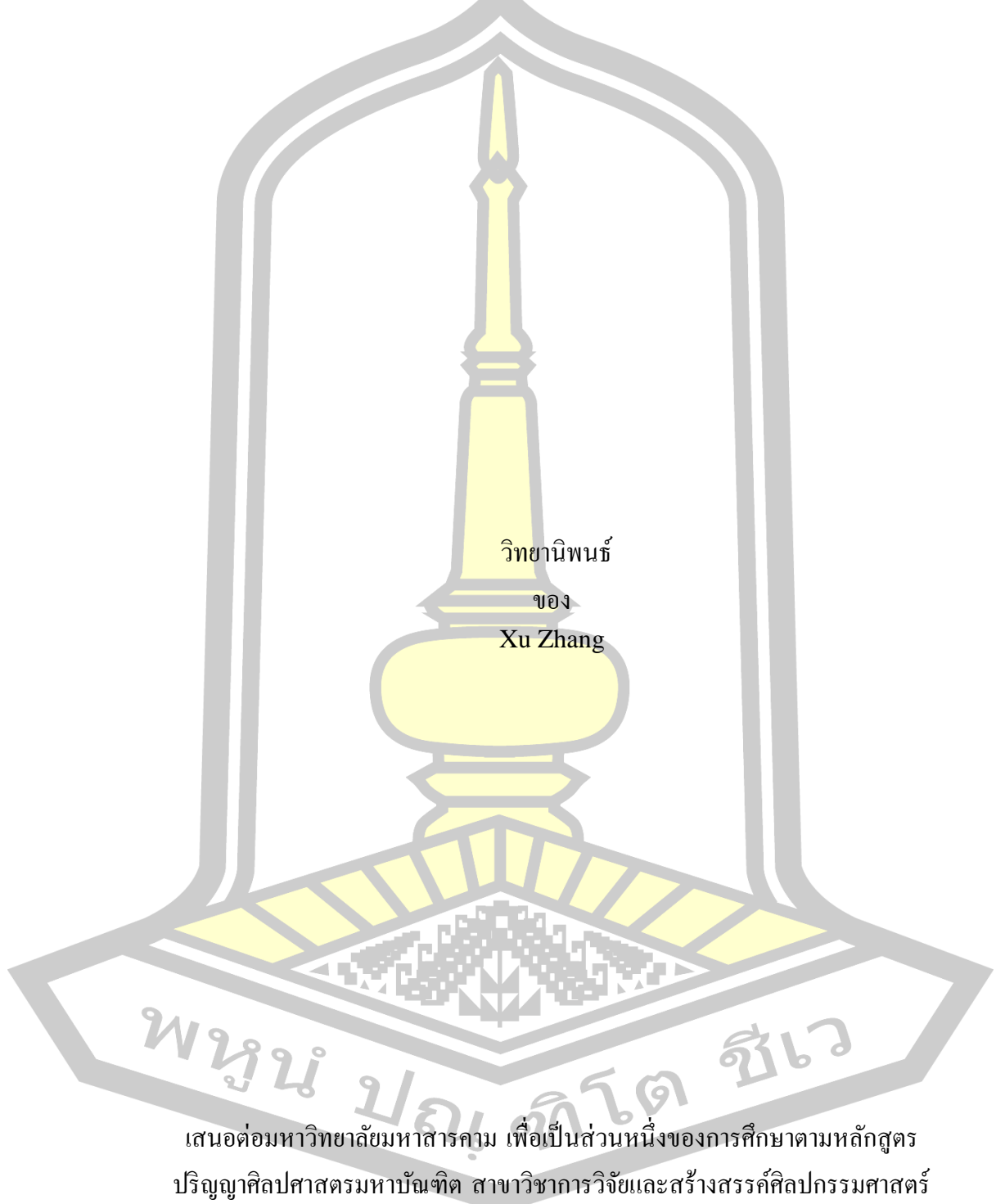
Ni-ni-gou Huaiyang, Henan Province: Reinvention of Traditional Folk Clay Art in  
the Context of Chinese Rural Revitalization

Xu Zhang

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

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Ni-ni-gou Huaiyang, มณฑลเหอหนาน: การคิดค้นศิลปะดินเหนียวพื้นบ้านแบบดั้งเดิมในบริบท  
ของการฟื้นฟูชนบทของจีน



เสนอต่อมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาดำเนินการตามหลักสูตร  
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### ABSTRACT

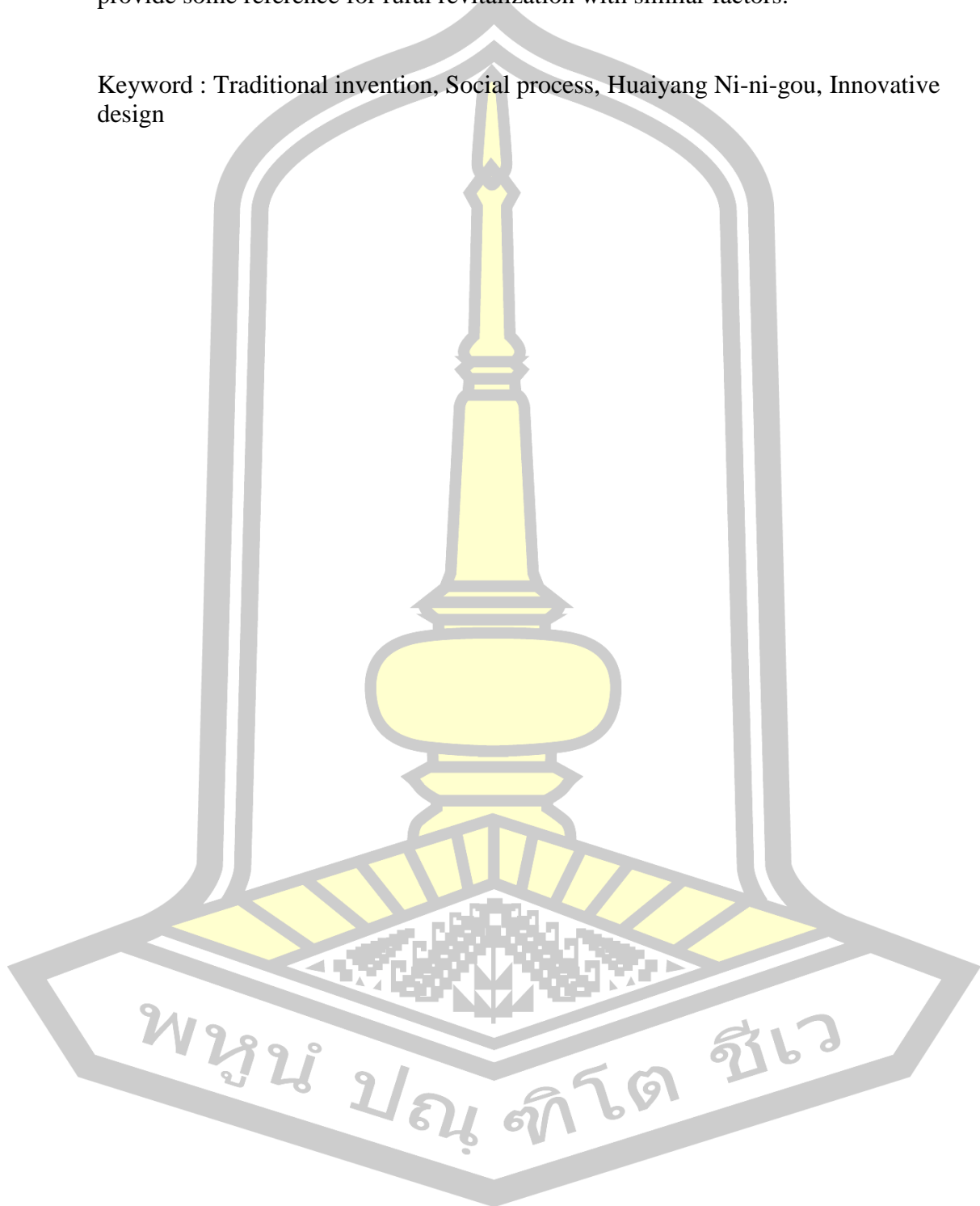
This study is a qualitative research utilizing the concept of the traditional the invention of things. There are three research objectives here: 1) to study the characteristics, connotations and historical development of clay Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province, 2) to study the invention of clay Ni-ni-gou under the dual dimensions of artwork and social process, and 3) to create a design for clay Ni-ni-gou that conforms to the invention laws of the clay Ni-ni-gou tradition. This study is based on the clay Ni-ni-gou of Huaiyang District, Henan Province. By analyzing the history of the development of Ni-ni-gou, we analyze the changes in the re-invention of the Ni-ni-gou tradition, and thus draw conclusions to create new designs that conform to the context of rural revitalization.

The results of the study found that the clay sculpture art of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is an important part of folk art, which has a history of thousands of years, and the record of its existence can be traced back to the period of prehistoric civilization. The Ni-ni-gou, with its unique cultural connotations and rich forms of artistic expression, demonstrates the spirituality embedded in the Ni-ni-gou, which has a very important research value. For Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, the changes of Ni-ni-gou being invented are analyzed from the perspectives of artwork and social process. In the dimension of artwork, the Ni-ni-gou have produced new inventions in shape, color, and content, which highlights its artistic value even more. The development of society promotes the transformation of artwork, and the transformation of artwork promotes the social process, both of which are based on each other. Whether the traditional invented Ni-ni-gou is adapted to the development of the current society, what is feasible and what is not feasible is analyzed, and what aspects are in line with the invention of the law of the Ni-ni-gou are further derived, which lays the foundation for the new design of the Ni-ni-gou, and finally the Ni-ni-gou under the strategy of rural revitalization is designed. New Design.

In the process of rural revitalization, this study explores rural cultural and artistic resources, uses the concept of traditional the invention, preserves and disseminates rural traditional culture by means of new design, creates a new design

for Ni-ni-gou that conforms to the law of invention, and to a certain extent promotes the sustainable and coordinated development of the countryside, in the hope that it can provide some reference for rural revitalization with similar factors.

Keyword : Traditional invention, Social process, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, Innovative design



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After several months, through the process of collecting data, organizing and analyzing, researching and arguing, and repeatedly revising, the thesis has finally settled down, and in this process, I deeply feel the long academic road and the bumpy road of research. At the same time, I feel small and ashamed because of my lack of knowledge, and would like to express my deep admiration and high regards to professors, experts and scholars.

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k them once again and wish them a lifetime of happiness and well-being!

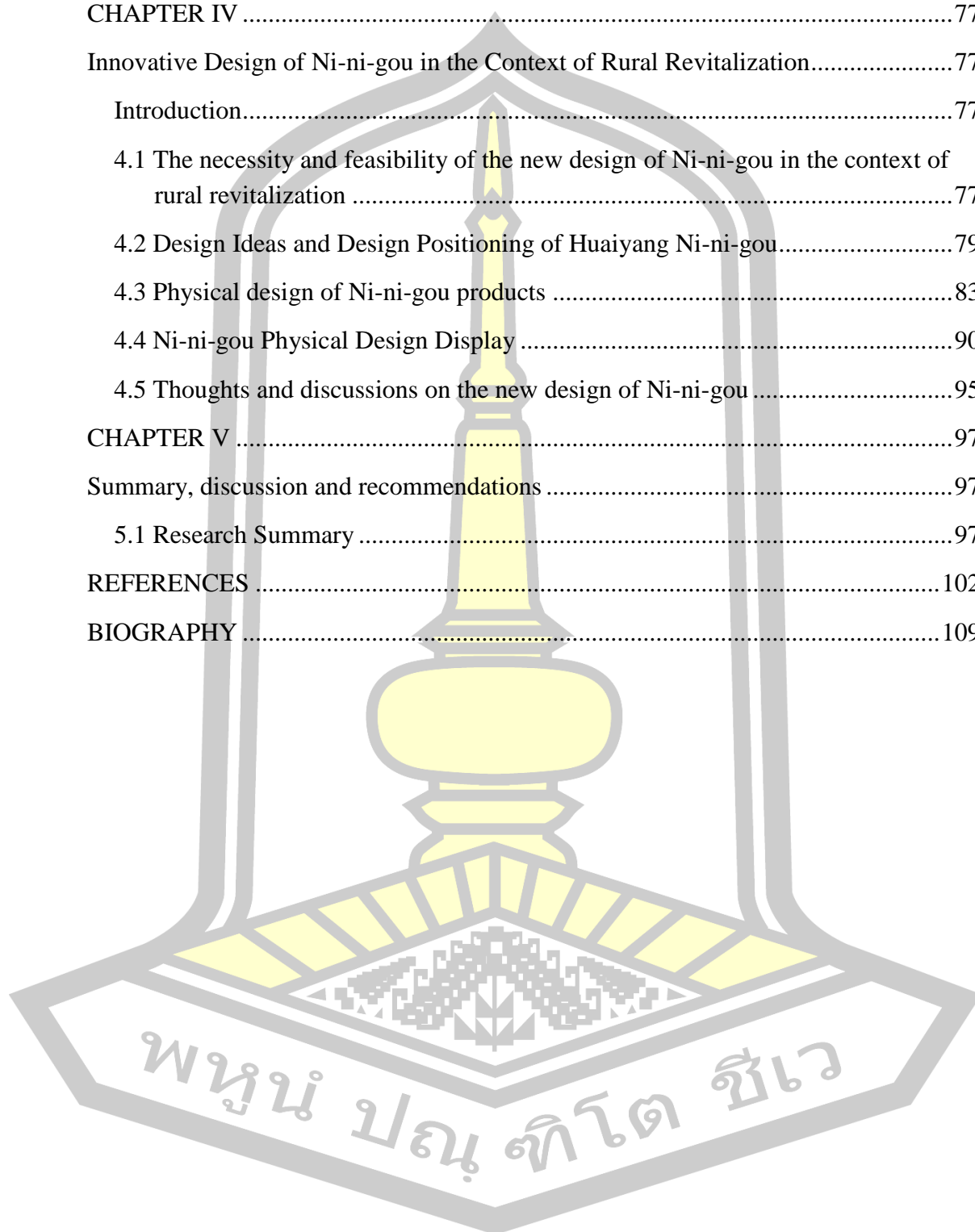
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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### 1. Background of the study

Ni-ni-gou (the Ni-ni-gou used in this article is written phonetically) originates from Huaiyang District, Henan Province, and is the art of local craftsmen using mud to fabricate a variety of forms of painted mud sculptures. It is mainly produced in twelve villages east of Huaiyang County. This area is eight miles south of the ancient Wanqiu site and only two miles to the Taihao Mausoleum. The twelve villages are: Jinzhuang, Wuzhuang, Chenlou, Xialou before and after, Shizhuang, Xulou, Duanzhuang, Jinzhuang, Liuzhuang, Wugutai, Baiwangzhuang. As China's intangible cultural heritage, it was included in the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2014, and is known as "true totem, living fossil", with high research value, its peculiar form, exaggerated patterns, carrying thousands of years of people's worship of reproductive culture. Every year, from the second day of February to the third day of March, Taihao Mausoleum, located in Huaiyang, organizes a temple fair to worship Fuxi's ancestor. This custom has been passed down for a long time, and the temple fair is very lively, with a large number of visitors and a large number of folk handicrafts in circulation. Ni-ni-gou are the most distinctive feature of the festival, as they are both ritual objects used for disaster relief and prayers for good luck, and folk toys used for children's entertainment. (Guo Xinsheng, 2008) Meanwhile, in the context of rural revitalization, local people have reinvented the traditional Ni-ni-gou into a modern aesthetic craft through their wisdom.

Mud Ni-ni-gou overlap two "mud" character, the first "mud" character as a determiner, as a verb, that is, with the hands of rolling, but also contains the meaning of intimacy, the latter "mud" character as a noun, that is, the object of the material "mud". The second character "mud" is used as a noun, meaning the material of the object, "mud". The color of Ni-ni-gou is black, and then various patterns are drawn in green, red, yellow and white. Through unconventional dots or lines, different decorative patterns are formed, and there are many varieties of these traditional patterns, most of which are derived from the accumulation and refinement of the life experiences and inheritance of traditional folk artists, such as the sun pattern, the dotted line pattern, the pattern of flowers and grasses, the pattern of fishes, the pattern of diamonds, the pattern of leaves, etc. Among them, the pattern of Ni-ni-gou is the same as that of Ni-ni-gou, which is the same as that of Ni-ni-gou. Among them, the patterns of Ni-ni-gou are closely related to the spiritual needs of honoring ancestors, entertaining the gods and praying for heirs. At the same time, the production process of Ni-ni-gou is very elaborate, and the craft is mostly passed down from generation to generation. Ni-ni-gou production seems simple, in fact, is not an easy task, each process is full of artisan ingenuity. First of all, picking mud, "Ni-ni-gou" kneading material from the local unique clay, yellow rubber mud, this mud is more sticky, drying is not easy to have gaps; the second step, playing mud, playing mud, with a wooden stick, constantly pounding the mud; the third step, pinch blanks, pinch blanks into the desired shape; the fourth step, dyeing black, before, used to dye the pigment is made of wort and pigmented with a mixture of wheat. The pigment is mixed with malt juice and pot ash and water, but now the pigment is used directly for dyeing for

convenience; Step 5: Painting. After the black base color dries, the sorghum head is sharpened into a pointed brush for coloring, and finally coated with varnish for drying.

There are many kinds of Ni-ni-gou, according to Huaiyang County Records, there are more than 500 kinds of Ni-ni-gou. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou artist Fang Guofu old man said: "Ni-ni-gou (Ni-ni-gou) looks like a lot, the old look is also a thousand or so, and now there are a lot of new mold is more." According to the different shapes are roughly divided into: totem series shapes, animal series shapes, mascot series shapes three categories. Ni-ni-gou on the shape of the large temple statues, small to the desk furnishings as well as children's toys. Very popular with tourists. This makes the production of Ni-ni-gou gradually become a local solution to the employment problem, the "golden rice bowl" to get rich (Xia Xianqing, 2017).

Huaiyang, in the eastern part of Henan Province, China, is located in the center of the Yellow-Huakai Plain, which was known as "Chen" and "Wanqiu" in ancient times, and is one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization. Huaiyang has a flat terrain, four distinct seasons, pleasant climate, abundant rainfall, fertile land, and abundant produce, and human beings have been living here since the primitive society. The history of Huaiyang is profound, about in the 40th century B.C., Taihao Fuxi's as the leader of the Eastern Barbarians set his capital here, which is the seat of the human ancestor, Fuxi, and is called "Hsi Huang's hometown". Later, according to historical records and myths and legends: Taihao Fuxi is the humanities of the Chinese nation, the first of the Three Emperors and Five Emperors, is the earliest king recorded in Chinese ancient books, capital of Huaiyang, Henan, buried in Huaiyang, Taihao Mausoleum. He was one of the three emperors of the ancient times, and the outstanding leader of the ancient Chinese tribes in the legend. Because Fuxi's revered the dog, so the descendants of the worship of Fuxi and the dog as a clan totem, in ancient times left a lot of stories about the dog totem, such as "So Shen Ji" Volume 14 "Pan Gou Chapter," said Pan Gou good five-color farming, for the barbarians ancestor. According to these legends, the introduction of "Ni-ni-gou" should also be related to the production life at that time. The Taihao Ling Ancestor of Man Temple Festival was an important factor in the spread of "Ni-ni-gou", and the Ni-ni-gou is attached to the Taihao Ling Ancestor of Man Temple Festival and continues to this day. (Zhang Jin, 2022)

Ni-ni-gou has a long history, there are many different opinions about the origin of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, the overview is divided into myths and legends and from the life said. Some scholars will Ni-ni-gou development is divided into three stages, the first, prehistoric legend stage: Ni-ni-gou is in the embryonic stage. The emergence of Ni-ni-gou is not accidental, the history of mud sculpture is long, the primitive ancestors early on the nature of clay and animal modeling has a deep understanding and experience in the primitive culture under the breeding, Ni-ni-gou was born. Ni-ni-gou culture contains, more is to the mysterious power of worship, pregnant with the ancestors of the world of life intuitive feelings and romantic imagination. It has relatively unique cultural characteristics, such as quiet, black, mysterious, exaggerated shape, and has many similarities with the Neolithic colored pottery. According to the history of the production of Ni-ni-gou in Junyang, the Ni-ni-gou may have been pierced a long time ago.



Second, the stage of agricultural society: the development and maturity of Ni-ni-gou. At this stage, the Ni-ni-gou not only maintains the mystery but also contains the function of secular toys, and becomes the children's toys that people sell and buy. In terms of cultural connotation, the Ni-ni-gou at this time has inherited the legacy of the mythological era and joined the real utilitarian expectations of people in their lives, becoming a popular good-luck charm, and an important cultural intermediary symbol for communicating between the people and their ancestors and spirits. In terms of modeling, it not only maintains the primitive image of ancient simplicity but also incorporates the cultural spirit of the people in the agricultural era.

Third, the modern society stage: the Ni-ni-gou facing difficulties, continuous innovation stage. Due to the impact of modern civilization on traditional culture, the mysterious color of Ni-ni-gou is no longer, the function of toys has been seriously weakened, facing the plight of being eliminated from the market. The past splendor of Ni-ni-gou is fading, now only as a curiosity and nostalgia to satisfy people's existence. The inheritance of Ni-ni-gou is facing unprecedented challenges, and artists are forced by the social market to make creative modifications to the cultural connotations of Ni-ni-gou. The fusion of clay dogs with modern culture has resulted in an increasingly rich and diverse culture. (Li Wentao, 2009)

The different stages of the historical development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou can clearly reflect the changes in the different values embedded in the Ni-ni-gou. In the process of formation and development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou during these periods, the Ni-ni-gou are changing in each historical period.

Nowadays, in China's progress towards modernization, the countryside has always been an important link in its transformation chain. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council have promulgated the Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022) and the Opinions on Promoting Cultural Industries to Enable Rural Revitalization, proposing that, on the basis of protecting and inheriting folk arts, the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese outstanding traditional folk arts, giving full play to the role of cultural empowerment, can well drive the rural civilization Construction. In the context of rural revitalization, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou will be explained by the concept of "traditional the invention".

The term "invention of tradition" is derived from the British anthropologist Hobsbawm's monograph *The Invention of Tradition*. According to the author of the book "Tradition is not an unchanging relic handed down from antiquity, but a living creation of the present generation; the apparently ancient traditions that affect our daily lives have only a short history; we have always been in a state of, and have had to be in a state of, inventing traditions, except that in modern times the invention has become even more rapid". Hobsbawm emphasizes the importance and necessity of "invention" rather than overemphasizing the importance of tradition and losing the impetus for innovation. Many domestic traditions have been revitalized in innovation and invention, not only being reborn with new connotation, but also enhancing cultural self-confidence. But at the same time, there is also no lack of criticism of the invention or reuse of tradition, the phenomenon of negative voices, these voices are mainly focused on the functional transformation, the symbolism of the change, excessive commercialization and so on several aspects. In fact, the development of anything can not be smooth, nor can it be perfect, everything, which itself is not in

line with historical materialism. The development of things has a contradictory dialectical relationship of opposition and unity. The inheritance and innovation of traditions are also the same, and none of them can be improved and developed continuously in solving new problems. In the final analysis, history is still chosen and created by the people, and the re-creation and invention of traditions only reflect the people's requirements of the times. The invention of tradition actually refers to the two levels of inheritance and innovation of tradition. Any traditional culture is a product of invention to meet the requirements of the times, in the current cultural tourism fever, "non-legacy" heritage and protection of the background of the times, many traditional culture in the innovation of the new era has been given new connotations. Only by boldly absorbing cultural elements that meet the requirements of the times on the basis of tradition can tradition be passed on from generation to generation.

According to some scholars, the so-called "invention of tradition" refers to the fact that in the process of social change from tradition to modernity, to more modernity and to the renewal of modernity, society continues to generate its own corresponding traditions, new traditions and renewed traditions. As to how traditions are "invented" by modernity, from the point of view of form, there are self-consciously transforming, utilizing and inventing as well as spontaneously accumulating "inventions"; from the point of view of content, there are two very obvious ways, one is that modernity gives traditions new meanings that are different from those of the past (reconfiguration), and the other is that modernity creates new traditions corresponding to them (new construction). (Zheng Hangsheng, 2008: 64-65)

Looking at the origin and development of the clay dogs in Huaiyang, it is not difficult to realize that at the beginning, its unique symbol was given a religious function of fertility worship. With the development of the temple fair, a large number of Ni-ni-gou are sold every year to meet the needs of people for praying for the continuity of their children and grandchildren, family harmony and good fortune. Nowadays, in order to meet the needs of the market, Ni-ni-gou have become a kind of folk clay art. The Ni-ni-gou is not a newly invented product, but its function, meaning and other aspects in contemporary life have changed due to social development. Therefore, it is called a traditional invention. Ni-ni-gou have contributed to the economy, culture and society of Huaiyang, creating works with artistic characteristics and cultural values, and their roles in people's daily lives include the expectation of a good harvest, praying for good luck and auspiciousness, and driving away evil spirits to avoid disasters, so it is of great significance to study the changes in the development of the Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang. There are positive factors in the development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in the social process, but there are also many problems, such as the government's support and attention, the expanding range of audiences, and the change of artistic functions to increase sales. Problems exist, such as whether the traditional re-invented Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou are accepted by people, whether they have lost their original value, and whether there are controversies over the improvement of the production process. Aiming at the longitudinal comparative analysis of the problems in the development and change, this study gives the corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. In order to realize the better inheritance, innovation and development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou.



In the process of researching my text "Ni-ni-gou", Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, as a relatively ancient remnant of traditional Chinese folk culture, is a living remnant of ancient culture, which is closely connected to the roots of Chinese culture. The Ni-ni-gou has a long history like a fossil, almost the same age as Chinese civilization. The Ni-ni-gou has been passed down in the folklore of the Central Plains since ancient times, and is a record and continuation of the culture of the primitive ancestors of the Chinese nation. Although it has gone through thousands of years of changes, it has never failed to maintain its tenacious vitality in the midst of social changes and cultural sifting. With the changes of social life, the traditional Ni-ni-gou in order to comply with the development of the times in the new environment can be better adapted, what changes have been made, on the basis of changes in how to better retain the tradition, was invented in the modern life of the traditional Ni-ni-gou how to be reconstructed, was re-invented by the motivation of what is the traditional invention of the value and significance of the invention of what is favorable or unfavorable, the invention of the tradition of what the local people bring. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the traditional invention?

Nowadays, with the policy support for rural revitalization, a new turnaround has been brought about for the development of folk art. The development of folk art is one of the important contents of developing rural characteristic cultural industry and building rural civilized life. By sorting out the origin legend, historical development, value of the times and survival environment of Ni-ni-gou, expressing the concept of traditional the invention according to the current situation of the development of Ni-ni-gou, and analyzing the impact of Ni-ni-gou on the local economy, society and culture, the theme helps to raise people's awareness of the artistic, historical and cultural value of folk Ni-ni-gou, and at the same time contributes to the preservation and inheritance of traditional folk art.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

- 2.1 To study the historical development of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province in general.
- 2.2 The invention of the Ni-ni-gou tradition is described in terms of both "artifact" and "social process".
- 2.3 Create a Ni-ni-gou design that conforms to the laws of invention of the Ni-ni-gou tradition.

## **3. Research issues**

- 3.1 How has Ni-ni-gou changed over time from the past to the present?
- 3.2 What kind of inventions in artistic characteristics did the clay dogs of Huaiyang, Henan Province produce and were they accepted by the public? What changes have been produced in the social process because of different positioning?
- 3.3 What is the value and significance of the invented Ni-ni-gou in the context of rural revitalization, and what kind of invention is more suitable for the development of modern society, economy, culture and tourism?

#### 4. Definition of terms

4.1 Ni-ni-gou: The Ni-ni-gou in this study is a unique folk art of clay sculpture in Huaiyang District, Henan Province, where local craftsmen use mud to fabricate a variety of forms of clay sculptures, the first mud means that it needs to be kneaded by hand, so it's mud, and the second mud means that it is made from its material, which is made of black rubber clay. They are called "Ni-ni-gou".

4.2 Rural Revitalization: The rural revitalization in this study is the proposal of China to promulgate the Opinions on Promoting Cultural Industries to Enable Rural Revitalization, which proposes that on the basis of the protection and inheritance of folk art, the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese excellent traditional folk art, giving full play to the role of cultural empowerment, can well drive the construction of rural civilization. Therefore, rural revitalization is chosen as the background.

4.3 Traditional re-invention: in this study, it refers to the invention of the Huaiyang clay dog, which is a phenomenon that is occurring in modern society, from the clay dog that is worshipped in temple festivals to the clay dog that is used in daily clay artwork.

4.4 Taihao Mausoleum: The Taihao Mausoleum in this study is a large-scale ancient architectural complex of mausoleums and temples built in Huaiyang District, Zhoukou City, Henan Province, in honor of Taihao Fuxi, the first of the Three Emperors. The text under study, the Ni-ni-gou, is based on this complex, and in the past history, the Ni-ni-gou was known as the mausoleum dog that guarded the Tai Hao Mausoleum, and there is a necessary connection between the two.

#### 5. Scope of the study

##### 5.1 Areas of research

Huaiyang District, Henan Province, named for its location north of the Huai River in China's Henan Province, was known as Wanyuqiu and Chenzhou in ancient times, and was the former capital of Fu Xi, the "Ancestor of Man". Fuxi's tomb, the Taihao Mausoleum, is commonly known as the "Temple of the Ancestor of Man," and the Taihao Mausoleum is the only place where clay dogs are sold. The researcher mainly focuses on the history, art and cultural value of the clay dogs in the region.

##### 5.2 Time

The researchers categorized it into the following four stages:

5.2.1 The prehistoric legend stage, dating back to the era of Fuxi and Nuwa, is mainly studied in terms of the myths and legends of Ni-ni-gou, totem worship, etc., and defines the cultural connotation of Ni-ni-gou during this period through a distinctive worldview.

5.2.2 Stagnation stage of development, the end of feudal society in 1912, a series of political, economic, and social changes in China led to a stagnant situation for Ni-ni-gou during this period.

5.2.3 Re-attention stage, after the reform and opening up in 1987, China's folk culture "hot" up, cultural roots again set off a new wave, this period enhanced the

study of folk art Ni-ni-gou, from the Ni-ni-gou's artistic value and cultural connotations of in-depth research.

5.2.4 The rural revitalization phase began with the introduction of the rural revitalization policy in 2017. This period centers on the dilemmas faced by Ni-ni-gou in the development of the social process and the continuous innovation aspect of the research, and through the traditional re-invention to solve the status quo problem.

### **5.3 Other Scope**

Against the background of China's rural revitalization policy, under the influence of the policy, the innovation in the production process of Ni-ni-gou, as well as the re-creation of Ni-ni-gou designs and patterns, have been used for souvenirs, artworks and cultural and creative products, which have protected the art of Ni-ni-gou and promoted the development of the local economy and rural revitalization through the living inheritance of multiple forms.

## **6. Research methodology**

### **6.1 Population and sample**

6.1.1 Inheritors engaged in the production of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang: Inheritors are the many families that have passed on this craft for many generations, as can be seen in the craft of making Ni-ni-gou. As inheritors, they have a comprehensive understanding of the craft, historical development and cultural connotations of Ni-ni-gou.

6.1.2 Government staff: The local government promotes the holding of Renzu Temple Fairs and the development of the inheritance of the art of clay dogs through its rural revitalization policy, and government staff can be used as research subjects to collect information.

6.1.3 Visitor groups: The Taihao Tomb Temple Fair, which takes place from the second day of February to the third day of March in the lunar calendar, is known as the "No. 1 Temple Fair in the Central Plains". Taihao Mausoleum is a famous tourist attraction in Huaiyang area, and the clay dogs in Huaiyang have become a popular item for tourists. Tourist groups are also an important factor influencing the change of Ni-ni-gou art. During this time, tourist products developed more strongly, such as souvenirs and decorations, and sales increased.

6.1.4 Local people: the current problems of Ni-ni-gou can be understood from the people's point of view through the level of awareness of Ni-ni-gou among the local people.

### **6.2 Research tools**

Through audio and video recording tools, i.e., cameras and audio recording tools: record and take and study relevant pictures and information.

### **6.3 Data collection**

6.3.1 Documentary data collection: I collected relevant literature through books, libraries and the Internet. Literature was collected from the following three aspects: literature related to the research text Henan Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou; literature related to the research concept of "traditional the invention"; and literature related to the research in the context of "rural revitalization".

#### 6.3.2 Field research to collect information:

Interviews: opinions of Ni-ni-gou making craftsmen, tourists and locals were collected based on field data. Over the years, Ni-ni-gou have changed in shape, craftsmanship and style, resulting in a more modern onslaught to keep up with social development.

Observation: participatory and non-participatory observation.

### 6.4 Data analysis

We analyze the Ni-ni-gou of Huaiyang, Henan Province by reviewing related literature and field investigation, analyze the current problems of the development of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang based on the historical development and changes of Ni-ni-gou, and put forward the corresponding countermeasures and suggestions with the concept of tradition re-invention to create a new design.

### 6.5 Research Reports

6.5.1 Full research paper: presented through descriptive analytical writing and incorporating images.

6.5.2 Research articles: published in international journals or at ISI level.

## 7. Literature review

### 7.1 Literature review of the research text

Although the Huaiyang clay sculpture of clay dogs was noticed as early as the 23rd year of the Republic of China, it really attracted the attention of scholars in the early 1980s of the last century. In March 1987, at a meeting held in Huaiyang County, Henan Province, by the Folk Crafts Research Association of the Chinese Arts and Crafts Society, the Ministry of Culture of the Central Government (now the Ministry of Culture and Tourism), the Provincial Department of Culture (now the Department of Culture and Tourism), and experts and scholars unanimously agreed that the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" with a black background on clay tires was a worship ritual object with a high degree of distortion of the images of Fuxi, Nuwa, and other groups of ancient beings. It is a highly generalized and deformed worship and sacrificial object.

Through reviewing the literature, most scholars analyze the evolution of the historical development of Ni-ni-gou and the changes in their shapes. One of the main works on the origin and history of Ni-ni-gou is Ni Bao Cheng's "Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou" and "Ni-ni-gou - Mud Goo Goo", which believe that Ni-ni-gou come from Fuxi legend or primitive sorcery, and also categorize and interpret the different types of Ni-ni-gou. Wang Yueqin's "Henan Huaiyang "Ling Dog"" also believes that the Ni-ni-gou comes from the legacy of people's worship of the human ancestor Fuxi. These works mainly analyze the myths about the origin of Ni-ni-gou.

Among them, Du Chun's "Discussing the Reproductive Worship Culture of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang", "Investigation and Protective Research on the Status Quo of the Temple of the Ancestors of Huaiyang People and the Ni-ni-gou", and "Chu Cultural Elements of the "Ni-ni-gou" in Huaiyang", etc. are some examples. In these documents, the authors believe that the development and evolution of the Ni-ni-gou has a blood relationship with the folklore of Huaiyang. The unique folk customs and religious beliefs of Huaiyang nurtured and developed the traditional folk cultural form



of Ni-ni-gou, and the Ni-ni-gou as a form of folk art interpenetrated with the content of folk customs. This part mainly explains that the reproductive culture and religious beliefs unique to Ni-ni-gou are the embodiment of cultural connotation and the expression of traditional Ni-ni-gou.

On Ni-ni-gou modeling: Meng Qinghong's "Folk Culture Characteristics of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou"; Zheng Ling's "Primitive Thinking Characteristics of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou"; Zhang Rui's "Comparison of the Artistic Images of Huishan Mud Men and Quasi-Yang Ni-ni-gou"; Xin Leah's "Comparison of the Artistic Characteristics of Joon County Mud Gu Gu and Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou Images" and other articles. Liya's "Comparison of the Artistic Characteristics of Joon County Mud Gu Gu and Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou Image" and other articles. The author believes that these documents have roughly classified the types of clay dogs and summarized the artistic characteristics of clay dogs. There is no mention that with the change of the times, what changes have been made in the modeling of Ni-ni-gou, and what kind of improvements have been made to adapt to the development of the times.

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou has been further enhanced through the research in recent years, which has collected and accumulated a wealth of research materials. Researchers are not limited to the initial tracing of the historical origins of the Ni-ni-gou, but have gained a deeper understanding of the local customs and beliefs through a large number of field studies. Scholars found that the Ni-ni-gou is not only a traditional folk clay sculpture, but also maps out people's inner world from the aesthetics of modeling. The black background and five-color pattern around the Ni-ni-gou is a reflection of ancient Chinese culture, which is closely related to the Fuxi era, and also reflects the needs and desires of the Chinese ancestors for the will of reproduction for thousands of years. As the guardian of the Fuxi Mausoleum, the Ni-ni-gou has been passed down through thousands of years, and it influences people's daily life, possessing a strong social status and role. Current research on the functionality of the Ni-ni-gou still leaves much to be desired, and its transmission and development are now facing a major crisis.

## 7.2 Literature review of research concepts

In terms of the definition of the research concept, the concept of traditional invention was proposed by the British scholar Hobsbawm in 1983. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, in *The Invention of Tradition*, argue that: "Traditions which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and are sometimes invented, often by the use of old materials to construct a new form of invented tradition for a quite recent purpose. invented forms of tradition for fairly recent purposes.

As socio-economic changes occur, some traditions need to be reinvented in order to continue and thrive. Under the influence of globalization, modernization and consumerism, the rise of folk tourism and the the invention of traditional arts and customs have brought opportunities for the economic development of folk art. In this context, the traditional art of clay sculpture, under the influence of internal and external factors, and in order to adapt to the fast-developing environment of the outside world, the "invention of traditions" here serves as an opportunity for the development of the folk culture of clay sculpture and the local economy.

In this study, the invention of tradition is mainly applied to two aspects of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. On the one hand, the changes in artwork, the diversification of the shape of Ni-ni-gou in adapting to the development of society, the exquisiteness of patterns, and

the richness of colors, all of which enhance its artistic value; on the other hand, the changes in the social process of the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, from ritual objects related to Fuxi culture to clay toys for praying for good luck to tourist souvenirs, and from being unnoticed to being included in the system of countryside revitalization.

Throughout the above research, it can be found that there are a lot of theoretical data and picture data for Ni-ni-gou mainly focusing on the legend and cultural connotation of Ni-ni-gou, and the research stays too much in the historical and cultural aspects, in the modern society, the Ni-ni-gou inherited for thousands of years is undergoing a drastic change, and new development trend has appeared. In modern society, the Ni-ni-gou inherited for thousands of years is undergoing drastic changes and new trends are emerging. However, the above studies have neglected the changes and innovations of the Ni-ni-gou in modern society. Related scholars have emphasized on historical and cultural studies and paid less attention to the significant changes of Ni-ni-gou in today's society and culture. In this paper, we hope to analyze the Ni-ni-gou in a historical longitudinal comparative and systematic way in accordance with the social historical process and in the dimension of tradition the invention, hoping to come up with a new systematic understanding of the inheritance and development of Ni-ni-gou, which will be helpful and beneficial to different groups in the society, and moreover, hoping to give a new elaboration and explanation to the Ni-ni-gou under the background of rural revitalization.

With the development of modern society, the traditional Ni-ni-gou from the shape to the cultural content have undergone significant changes. Artists have broken through thousands of years of adherence to the creed and made bold innovations to the clay dog, thus increasing the market value of the clay dog. In order to adapt to today's social and cultural heritage, the producers implanted modern concepts into the traditional Ni-ni-gou, which made the cultural connotation of Ni-ni-gou show a rich and colorful trend. These changes in Ni-ni-gou have a deep connection with modern social life, and it reflects the inclusive and diversified characteristics of the cultural spirit of modern society. However, today's academic research on the significant changes in the Ni-ni-gou modern society is relatively small, the author believes that these new changes in the Ni-ni-gou to describe the traditional cultural form of Ni-ni-gou culture is not only a deepening of the understanding of the Ni-ni-gou culture, but also the Ni-ni-gou to grasp the trend of the future development of the Ni-ni-gou, Ni-ni-gou makers and researchers to provide references and draw lessons from.

## **8. Concepts, theories and conceptual frameworks**

### **8.1 Research concepts**

The concept of my research is the invention of tradition. This research concept is derived from the British anthropologist Hobsbawm's monograph, *The Invention of Tradition*.

In this study, the traditional invention is mainly applied to two aspects of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. On the one hand, the traditional Ni-ni-gou is an art product; on the other hand, the traditional Ni-ni-gou is a cultural symbol. From the point of view of art product, it is a modern high aesthetic handicraft product with many different shapes, patterns and colors, used for entertainment and decoration in life, from the

point of view of cultural symbols, it appeared in the temple fair, related to the local folk characteristics of Huaiyang, and in the process of social development, the positioning is different, which produces different changes, and the value of mud Ni-ni-gou is changing, which goes from folk art to being recognized by the official.

## 8.2 Conceptual framework of the study

The text of this study is the Henan Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, a folk clay art whose conceptual framework is divided into two parts, left and right. The left part explores the analysis of the change of mud Ni-ni-gou in the stage of artwork through the change of shape, color and material. The right part explores the change of Ni-ni-gou through the change of social process in the context of rural revitalization, centering on the concept of traditional invention, where the social process promotes the transformation of the artwork, and the transformation of the artwork promotes the development of the social process, and the two are based on each other.

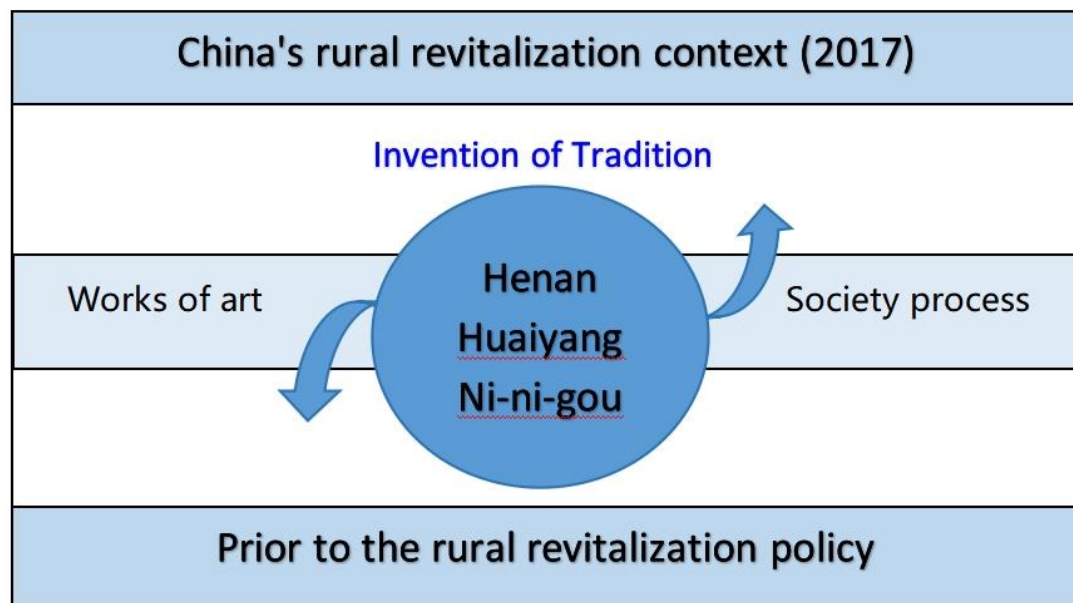


Figure 1 Conceptual framework  
Source: Researcher's own design

## 9. research program

Step 1: Review of literature and data collection (1-2 months)

Journals and magazines, Knowledge Networks to collect scientific articles;  
Traveled to Huaiyang, Henan Province to conduct field interviews;  
Observe, take pictures, record.

Step 2: Summarize the data and draw valid conclusions to apply to the paper you are researching (3-4 months)

Organize data and analyze and summarize valid information.  
Putting the data in the report.

Step 3: Write a published research article from the above analysis (4-5 months)

Step 4: Submit a full dissertation for graduation defense (5-6 months)

## 10. Benefit of Research

10.1 Benefits to academia: increased level of understanding of folk clay art. This is relevant to the past and present, including the artwork stage and the social process stage of change in relation to rural revitalization. In particular, this study can serve well as a model for research on the same issues elsewhere.

10.2 Benefits to the society and community of the study site: this topic can be applied to the development of Huaiyang, economic development, tourism promotion, etc.

10.3 Benefits of developing national or local government policies: Helps to complement and adapt national guidelines and policies in the development of folklore.





## **CHAPTER II**

### **Historical Development of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the historical development of clay dogs in Huaiyang, Henan Province, China. On the clay modeling of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, the author only elaborates on the history and development as well as the artistic and cultural values of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou as a basis for the phenomena described in the subsequent chapters. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part introduces an overview of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou to understand the origin and background of Ni-ni-gou. The second part describes the historical process of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, taking the timeline as a rule, from the period of prehistoric legends to the modern period of rural revitalization. Ni-ni-gou go through four phases, and analyzes the historical development and changes that the Ni-ni-gou have experienced in this process. The third part describes the artistic value and cultural connotation of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, describing the artistic value of Ni-ni-gou from the shape, pattern, color and production process respectively, and explaining the relationship between Ni-ni-gou and Taihao Tomb in terms of cultural connotation, how the Ni-ni-gou rely on Taihao Tomb and exist, as well as the relationship between the belief culture of Ni-ni-gou in the historical development. In recent years, as a kind of national intangible heritage has received a lot of attention, the study of Ni-ni-gou is not only a local cultural and artistic excavation, but also a re-cognition of traditional Chinese folk culture.

#### **2.1 Huaiyang's natural and human environment**

##### **2.1.1 Huaiyang Natural Environment**

Huaiyang is located in southeastern Henan Province and central Zhoukou City, with a length of 56 kilometers from north to south, a width of 40.6 kilometers from east to west, and a maximum length of 73 kilometers from southeast and northwest, with a total area of 1334.56 square kilometers. Huaiyang is located in the north of Huai Shui River, southeast of Henan Province, above the Yuandong Plain, 26 kilometers away from Zhoukou City, 220 kilometers away from Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan Province. Huaiyang belongs to Zhoukou City and is located in the center of 10 counties and cities in Zhoukou City. Huaiyang has 21 townships and towns under its jurisdiction, with a population of 1.35 million. Huaiyang is located in the hinterland of the Huanghuai Plain, with fertile land, mild climate, abundant rainfall, and abundant products, and is known as a large agricultural county in China.



Figure 2 Map of Henan

Source: <https://image.so.com>

Huaiyang District is located in the southern edge of the Yellow River alluvial fan, belongs to the North China Plain, is part of the Yellow Huaihai Plain area, the terrain from the northwest to the southeast tilt. The altitude is 50 meters in the northwest and 40 meters in the southeast, the natural slope of the ground is 1/5000 to 1/6000, the total land area of the county is 2,218,800 acres, among which the cultivated land area is 1,773,200 acres, accounting for 80.53% of the total land area, and there are three major types of soil, namely, double-hexagonal soil, sandy soil and silt soil. Most of the soils are rich in nutrients, high in fertility, loose and easy to plow, and suitable for the growth of many kinds of crops and forests. The terrain in the county is basically flat, but due to the influence of the Yellow River south of the flooding of many deposits, the ground was "big flat small uneven" state, resulting in a number of areas of varying sizes and depths of puddle slopes, which covers an area of about 480,000 acres, accounting for 27% of the total cropland area. These puddles of sloping land in the past is a big rain disaster, a small rain disaster, "after the rain a bright, everywhere is the sound of frogs", ten years nine harvest. After the founding of new China, the party and the government led the people of the county on the puddle

of slopes over the years, is now a ditch crisscrossing the drainage system is sound, the history of flooding has been cured, the former "ten years, nine do not harvest" of the note slopes have been turned into a "grain mountain", "cotton sea". Huaiyang District is located at 33°20'-34°00'N latitude and 114°38'-115°04'E longitude, with a warm temperate monsoon climate. The climate is mild, with abundant rainfall, four distinct seasons, a long frost-free period and many hours of sunshine. Temperature, precipitation and wind direction change significantly with the seasons, both north and south of the long: spring warming early thawing fast; summer without heat, precipitation concentration; slow cooling in the fall; winter without severe cold, less rain and snow. It is characterized by long cold winters with little rain and snow, hot summers with concentrated rain, short warm seasons in spring and autumn, and dry winds at the turn of spring and summer. The average annual precipitation is 740 millimeters, and the average temperature is about 14°C. Surface water and groundwater resources are rich in the county, surface water mainly depends on natural rainfall, as rainfall is concentrated in the flood season, in order to reduce flooding, the surface water is more drainage-based, the use of less. Groundwater is generally buried about 3 meters deep, with a total storage capacity of about 280 million cubic meters, about 220 million cubic meters can be exploited, water-rich and medium water-rich areas accounted for 84.5% of the total area, and the water quality is good, the mineralization is small, and the development and utilization of industrial and agricultural production have a high economic value, the rivers are all belonging to the Huaihe River water system. In the west, there is a new canal basin, in the north and northeast, there is a black river basin, the basin area of more than 100 square kilometers of the backbone of the river 14; 30 to 100 square kilometers of the dry ditch 13, 10 to 30 square kilometers of the branch of the ditch 25. The county's large and small rivers are intertwined in a reasonable layout, the main role is to drain the water of visitors and flood water in the territory, and some of the rivers can also be used for irrigation and breeding. These favorable geographic location and good natural environment provide Huaiyang people with unique conditions for the development of agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry production.





Figure 3 Map of Huaiyang  
Source: <https://image.so.com>

Huaiyang has convenient transportation: two national highways, G106 and G311, and three expressways, Ningluo, Daguang and Shangnan, pass through the city and have exits in the urban area and Sitong Town. Zhengfu High Speed Railway has Huaiyang South Station in Huaiyang. Shaying River is directly connected to Huaihe River and Yangtze River. The civil airport of Zhoukou is under planning and construction, and the site is located in the south of Liu Zhentun Township. Zhoukou Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government to support the high-quality development of Huaiyang District, to speed up the promotion of Zhou-Huai integration of Zhou-Huai Road, G106 Wangdian to Wenchang Avenue section of the renovation project has been completed and opened to traffic, Zhou-Huai fast-track construction project is under intense construction.

Huaiyang, as a large agricultural county, since ancient times, local people have relied on planting crops for a living, and the proverbs that have been passed down for thousands of years, "If you are willing to work hard, the yellow soil will turn into gold," and "After the farmers have finished planting grains, it seems as if they are in the king's hands". This is a record of the history of the agricultural economy. With the construction process of beautiful countryside, Huaiyang District vigorously develops regional characteristic industries, focuses on the development of tourism and cultural industries, and actively develops unique local characteristics of the tourism industry, so as to make it develop into a comprehensive tourism area centered on Fuxi culture, integrating tourism and culture, ecological civilization, recreation and leisure as a



whole. In Huaiyang District, under the premise of promoting rural revitalization with tourism and agriculture as the main industries, some shortcomings of building beautiful villages are gradually exposed, most villages don't have tourism resources, the tourism economy of the main city area can't drive the development of the whole rural area, and it's hard to promote the implementation of rural revitalization strategy by relying on the economic benefits brought by the agriculture industry alone, so the construction of beautiful villages is facing great challenges and difficulties.

Ni-ni-gou as a traditional handicraft products, March 21, 2022 "on the promotion of cultural industries to empower the revitalization of the countryside views" put forward cultural leadership, industry-driven. Coordinate the protection, inheritance and innovative development of excellent traditional local culture, and give full play to the role of cultural empowerment. So the policy support of rural revitalization has brought new opportunities for the development of Ni-ni-gou. Under the premise of retaining traditional skills, recreation, explore new paths, the development of traditional folk art, is to increase the income of villagers, but also the development of rural characteristics of the cultural industry, the construction of rural civilized life is one of the important elements.

The author conducted a field survey, and found that Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is basically distributed in twelve villages east of Huaiyang County. This area is eight miles south from the remains of ancient Wanqiu, and only two miles to the Taihao Mausoleum. From the remains of the ancient city from the west to the east, to the Tai Hao Ling gathered, Huaiyang mud Ni-ni-gou production of more than ten villages, mainly concentrated in the northeast of the Tai Hao Ling one to four kilometers, respectively, is the Wugutai, white Wangzhuang, Jinzhuang, Xu Lou, Duanzhuang, Wangkeng, Liuzhuang, Shizhuang, Xialou, Wushuang, Chenlou, and so on. All of these villages are rural villages on the outskirts of the city, with villages of different sizes. These villages all follow common customs, religious beliefs and moral etiquette. Just like the Zhuang names of these villages, most of them are composed of a single family name with a common ancestor. Most of the artists who make Ni-ni-gou in the villages are inherited from father to son and from generation to generation. According to the author's preliminary statistics, there are about two thousand Ni-ni-gou artists. But with the development of the new countryside, the support of a variety of policies, the local people through a variety of forms of access to economic resources, economic development gradually improve the development of the village is getting better and better, resulting in these villages pinching Ni-ni-gou artists are decreasing year by year.

### **2.1.2 Huaiyang human environment**

Huaiyang, anciently known as Wanqiu, Chen or Chenzhou, as the pioneer of Chinese civilization, has more than 6,000 years of cultural deposits, has three times built the country, five times built the capital, "the capital", "the capital of the three emperors" of the beauty of the name. It is the capital and sleeping place of Taihao Fuxi, the first of the three emperors in Chinese history, and the birthplace of Chinese family name culture, "dragon" and "dragon culture" of the Chinese nation. The famous geologist Li Siguang proved that: 570 million years ago, in the case that most of China's territory was ocean, there appeared the ancient land of Huaiyang; 8,000 years ago, Taihao Fuxi built his capital here, named Wanqiu, which started the first dawn of Chinese civilization; 5,000 years ago, Shennong, the Emperor of the Yan

Dynasty, set up his capital here, and changed his name to Chen; 3,000 years ago, King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty sealed Guiman, the descendant of Emperor Shun, to build the State of Chen, which was called Chen Hu Gong; during the Warring States period, there was the State of Chen, which was called Chen Hu Gong; during the Warring States period, there was the State of Chen, which was called Chen Hu Gong. During the Warring States period, it was the capital of Chu and was called Chen Ying. In 196 B.C., Liu Bang, the founder of Han Dynasty, appointed his son Liu You as the king of Huaiyang, and established the state of Huaiyang, which was named after him. In 232 A.D., Emperor Ming of Wei of the Three Kingdoms, Chen four counties sealed Cao Zhi as king, now Huaiyang territory still has Cao Zhi's "Siling Mound". Since the Han and Tang dynasties, it has always been the political, economic and cultural center of East Henan. According to some historians, China's history is based on Beijing in 1,000 years, Xi'an in 3,000 years, and Huaiyang in 8,000 years. In the 12th year of the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, Huai Ning County was established, and in 1913, Huai Ning County was changed to Huai Yang County. The name Huaiyang County has been used since then. Until 2019, when the People's Government of Henan Province abolished counties and changed districts, Huaiyang County was changed to Huaiyang District.

According to historical records, Huaiyang is one of the regions in China where the primitive economy was developed earlier, and the folk legend says that Fuxi's and Shennong's started the primitive plantation industry in Huaiyang (Wanqiu). Successive kings set up government offices in Huaiyang, which contributed to the continuous change and development of Huaiyang. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Huaiyang (State of Chen) had already developed into a not-so-small city, thanks to the well-developed land and water transportation in Huaiyang (the two major water systems of the Ying River and the Cai River). During the Tang Dynasty, Huaiyang once developed to its heyday, with social stability and advanced agriculture. By the time of Song Dynasty, Huaiyang had been developed through the previous dynasties and took advantage of the fact that the Cai River was even busier at this time, and Huaiyang's economic development and social life went up to another level. The Ming and Qing Dynasties drove the development of Huaiyang due to the official attention, especially the annual official sacrifices to the Taeho Tomb. Before the Republic of China and the founding of the nation, Huaiyang's economy and society were greatly affected due to the political turmoil, and it was a time when all kinds of industries were pending.

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, Huaiyang, like the rest of Henan Province, had a plain and a clear climate throughout the year. The Cai River provided sufficient water irrigation, so the cultivation of food crops and cash crops was a major source of the economy at that time, which shows that the economic development of Huaiyang County at that time mainly relied on the small-farm economy. At the same time, Cai River, as an important waterway connecting Huaiyang's neighboring counties and cities, facilitated Huaiyang's external and internal exchanges, and during the annual Taihao Mausoleum Ancient Temple Festival, many people came to Huaiyang to pay homage to Fuxi by water, but the tourism industry and handicrafts, such as making Ni-ni-gou and cloth tigers, also made some contributions to the economy of Huaiyang.

After the reform and opening up and the development of the new era, now the face of Huaiyang has undergone a radical change, Huaiyang on the basis of small farm economy, vigorously develop industry and tourism, its economic development level in Zhoukou City in the forefront, the county's GDP is 8.71 billion yuan in 2008, all economic growth indicators are the first in Zhoukou City, urban and rural residents of the per capita net income increased year by year. At the same time, Huaiyang's industrial development is strong, forming an industrial system mainly based on plastics, textiles, food, etc., and establishing industrial parks, putting into production of degradable mulch film, Asia's largest production of PE pipes, etc. and vigorously introducing foreign investment, which have injected rare vitality into the economic development of Quiyang. Since Huaiyang has always been mainly engaged in planting industry, its output of grain, cotton, peanuts and cauliflower is now among the top in Henan Province. Nowadays, Huaiyang's location is even more obvious, with the 106 National Highway passing through its territory, and the proximity of Beijing-Kowloon and Longhai railroads, which strengthens the communication between Huaiyang and its neighboring areas, and helps Huaiyang's industrial and agricultural products to be exported to the outside world. In recent years, Huaiyang has also been affected by the influence of migrant labor, and a large number of people have gone out to work, which has solved the problem of transforming the surplus labor force in the countryside, and also contributed to the local economic development of Huaiyang.

Nowadays, the economic development and social life of Huaiyang is the result of many factors. However, we cannot deny that the economic development of Huaiyang is largely dependent on tourism. In recent years, with the goal of "China's Strong Tourism County", Huaiyang has strengthened the infrastructure construction of tourist attractions and publicity, and become one of the eight "Experimental Zones for Cultural Reform and Development" in Henan Province. It has become one of the eight "experimental zones for cultural reform and development" in Henan Province. According to the data, in 2008, Huaiyang annual comprehensive income of cultural tourism reached 1.51 billion, accounting for more than 12% of the total GDP. Only too is the Fuxi Mausoleum every year during the temple fair ticket revenue is extremely substantial, and the temple fair on the Ni-ni-gou, cloth tiger, a variety of small commodities, etc., each to Taihao Mausoleum people will take some home, which is also an objective income, while the temple fair also led to the development of the surrounding areas of food, housing, transportation and other aspects of the development. Other events, such as the annual Lotus Festival, are also the highlights of Huaiyang, and the 10,000-mu Longhu Lake carries the thousand-year history of Huaiyang.

Huaiyang is rich in historical and cultural resources. It has been called a feng shui treasure place by successive emperors and kings for "opening things up for business". The earliest collection of poems, the Book of Songs, contains 10 songs of Chen Feng; during the Spring and Autumn Period, Confucius came to Chen three times and lectured for four years, forming the core idea of the Analects; the story of Bao Zheng in the Northern Song Dynasty, who released grain in Chenzhou, has been widely circulated to this day. There are 5 national cultural relics protection units and 16 unique humanities and natural landscapes in the country. It is an important birthplace of dragon totem culture, farming culture and family name culture, where

more than 50 family names, such as Chen, Hu, Tian, Yuan, etc., originated. There are many places of interest in the county, including 10 sites of Da Wenkou culture and Longshan culture, 2 national cultural relics protection units and 4 county-level ones; the county town is identified by the National Tourism Administration as one of the must-go spots of the "National Roots and Ancestors Tourism Line" and the "Confucius Traveling to the Nations Tourism Line". The county town is identified by the National Tourism Administration as one of the must-go spots of "National Roots and Ancestors Tourism Line" and "Confucius Tourism Line", and is a provincial-level cultural and historical city. Taihao Mausoleum is known as "the first mausoleum in the world", and the temple fair of Taihao Mausoleum was awarded by Guinness Headquarters as "the temple fair with the largest number of worshippers in the world in a single day" with the number of tourists of 825,000 in a single day. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is called "real totem and living fossil".

## 2.2 The Historical Process of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou

Mud sculpture is a traditional form of folk culture in China, a legacy of early human culture, which developed along with mankind's own development, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is a legacy of China's ancient mud sculpture, with a far-reaching history.

According to "Huaiyang County Records" ": March 1987, China Arts and Crafts Society of Folk Crafts will be held in the county Ni-ni-gou academic seminar, the State Ministry of Culture, the province, the local cultural department leaders and experts, scholars, more than 60 unanimously agreed that: mud tires on the black background of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is Fu Xi, Nuwa and the ancient spirits of the group of highly generalized deformation of the sacrifice, is the Central Plains people for generations of oral tradition of mud toys. It is a clay toy that has been handed down orally by the people of the Central Plains for generations." Li Naiqing, the current director of the Huaiyang County Local History Office, writes in his book "Introduction to the Tahao Tomb" that "the origin of the Ni-ni-gou originates from the legend of Fuxi and Nuwa's creation of man out of clay." "This story took place in Huaiyang, so Huaiyang had the custom of making a lot of Ni-ni-gou thousands of years ago.<sup>1</sup>

Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province is a kind of clay toys, appeared in the local February 2nd Taihao Mausoleum Fuxi Temple, with primitive mysterious color and faith worship meaning. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou as a temple ritual of the sacred, is the general name of Huaiyang mud toys. Legend has it that "dog" is an animal kept by Fuxi, and after the death of Fuxi Nuwa, people made Ni-ni-gou to guard the mausoleum for him, so the Ni-ni-gou are also called "mausoleum dog", "spirit dog", the shape of which is simple, grotesque and serious. The color is gorgeous, and the decoration has a strong direction of reproduction. Its many varieties, unique shape, colorful clay dog crafts, often brought back by people around the world, as a gift to children and grandchildren, friends and relatives precious gifts. It not only continues the style of ancient toys, but also contains rich history and culture, myths and legends, recorded the development of human culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Huaiyang Local Records Compilation Committee, Henan People's Publishing House, Huaiyang County Records, 1991, p. 730.



Why is it called "Ni-ni-gou"? First of all, "mud" in the local meaning of "tuan", that is: tuan get, tuan pinch meaning, but also the superimposed word "mud" for the material "clay". The word "mud" also means "clay", so it is called "Ni-ni-gou". First of all, there are different versions of the origin of the "Ni-ni-gou", and either version proves that the ancient people of China worshiped and revered nature and gods. The colors and shapes of "Ni-ni-gou" are fully integrated with religious beliefs, history and culture, etc. They are rooted in the traditional culture of the Central Plains, with distinctive regional characteristics, and also reflect the hard work and wisdom of the Chinese people.

Secondly, the emergence of "Ni-ni-gou" is also closely related to the local profound Fuxi culture. Huaiyang, known as one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, was called Wanqiu and Chenzhou in ancient times, and was founded as a country four times and as a capital five times. Legends of Fuxi and Nuwa's creation of man out of clay have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. Because of the ancient society's desire and pursuit of reproduction, and the union of Fuxi and Nuwa symbolizes the continuation of life, people have always honored them as the protector god in their hearts, blessing all living things. As a result, this legend combined with the needs of people's hearts to create the weirdly shaped "Ni-ni-gou".

Once again, the "Ni-ni-gou" also reflects the totem worship and tribal culture of people in ancient times. Each tribe has a totem symbol to show its uniqueness. Fuxi gradually unified the Chinese tribes after the capital, in order to highlight the integration of the tribes, they will draw on the most unique elements of each tribal totem to form a new totem, the totem symbol is the "dragon" image. Since then, the dragon has gradually become a symbol of the Chinese nation, deeply rooted in people's hearts.

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou have been created, developed and evolved in the course of history and society. The development of Ni-ni-gou is subdivided into four stages.

### **2.2.1 Prehistoric Legendary Period**

The discovery of Ni-ni-gou dating back to the era of Fuxi Nuwa, Ni-ni-gou is said to have originated in prehistory. Huaiyang people believe that Ni-ni-gou originated in the human ancestor Fuxi, "Yi Chuan - Series of Rhetoric Biography," said: "the ancient Bao Xi's king of the world, but also, up to look at the image of the sky, down to look at the law of the land, look at the birds and animals of the text, the close to take all the body, and far from taking all the things, so the beginning of the eight trigrams, in order to pass the gods of the German to the type of everything! The feelings." Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou has a long history, there are many different opinions about the origin of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou myths and legends mainly include Nuwa Tuan Tu created people said, and human ancestor Fuxi related to the legend, Jumang said three categories.

The first category is the theory that Nuwa created man from the earth. The origin of "Ni-ni-gou" is full of mysterious colors, and many myths and legends about "Ni-ni-gou" are still circulating in Huaiyang folklore. One of the most popular and convincing ones is the story of Fuxi and Nuwa's "making man out of clay". According to legend, in the ancient times, the earth experienced a catastrophe, the world only Fuxi and Nuwa brother and sister survived, in order to reproduce and create human beings, they developed the idea of marriage, Fuxi and Nuwa married

after feeling the world only the two of them is very cold, so they took the materials on the ground and used the yellow earth to knead up many humanoid clay dolls, and then use their own immortal energy to the clay dolls body, instantly lifeless! Mud puppets are alive and jumping up, they pinch the mud puppets remaining mud and kneaded into a variety of animal shapes, such as chickens, puppies, kittens, etc., these animal shapes is now we see the "Ni-ni-gou". From ancient times to the present, the mythological stories of Nuwa and Fuxi, full of mysterious and beautiful colors, have been passed down from generation to generation by people in the form of "Ni-ni-gou", which is full of unique artistic styles. This form of artistic inheritance, which can also be described as an inheritance of faith, celebrates the great achievements and accomplishments of our ancestors, who worked hard and blessed their children and grandchildren.

### **The second type of Fuxi theory**

Although the Ni-ni-gou is named Ni-ni-gou. It has various shapes, and the shape of a dog is only one of its many shapes. Ni-ni-gou first of all it is a kind of mud made of mud sculpture, as a toy in the Taihao Tomb for sale. Taihao Tomb has a close relationship with Fuxi. So in people's opinion, the Ni-ni-gou is related to Fuxi. Legends about the Ni-ni-gou, but also just to verify this point of view. There are mainly the following legends related to Fuxi:

First, the totem said, at home and abroad, experts and scholars commented that Ni-ni-gou is a "real totem, living fossil". Taihao Fuxi's in raising livestock has very high attainments, in the livestock, the dog is the first to be trained, it is responsible for guarding the door, alarm, protection of the herd, and people believe that the dog is a gift from heaven, so the dog has become the totem of many clans.

The second is the dog change Fuxi said. According to the records of Huaiyang ancient times called "Wanqiu country", the enemy soldiers to attack the Wanqiu, about to soldiers under the city, the ministers have no countermeasures on how to make the enemy retreat. The king promised in the critical moment, no matter who, as long as the enemy can be repulsed within three days, he will be named emperor's son-in-law. Not long after, a big white turtle carrying a big yellow dog flew this way on the Cai River outside Wanqiu City. The big yellow dog roared three times at the other side, and all of a sudden, the sky was dark, and all the enemies were blown up into the sky and then fell heavily to the ground. Although the king was not willing to recognize a yellow dog as his son-in-law, he could not go back on his words. A minister then told the king, "I heard that this yellow dog is of great importance and is not an ordinary dog, and that if this dog is put in a jar, the dog can become a human being in forty-nine days." So the yellow dog was put in the jar and waited for seventy-nine days. But the princess, wishing to see it in advance, insisted on opening it early, in spite of the king's advice. When she opened it, she found a human-faced dog lying underneath .....

The third is the mausoleum said. Legend has it that Fuxi's very favorite dog, even after his death, also let the dog to his tomb. So in Huaiyang local Ni-ni-gou is also known as "mausoleum dog". Legend has it that the mausoleum dog has aura, with the role of disease-free and disaster-free, to drive away evil spirits and keep the peace.

### The third type of sentence mango says

It is said that Jumang was a loyal subordinate of Fuxi, and after Jumang's death, Fuxi created the Ni-ni-gou in memory of Jumang. In ancient times, "句" and "dog" have the same sound. This explanation also seems to contain a certain amount of truth. The "monkey-headed swallow" is also known as the "human-faced bird". It looks similar to the "Jumang" introduced in ancient myths. This is shown in the picture. The fact that the Ni-ni-gou were made of mud and sold at the Fuxi Mausoleum Temple Fair indicates that the Ni-ni-gou were made during this period, which is similar to the time when Fuxi named Jumang as the god of spring.



Figure 4 Monkey Head Bird's Nest

Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

The inheritor of the history and culture of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou told the author "The legend of Fuxi and Nuwa is widely spread in our area, and all the adults and children here know the myths and legends of the human ancestor masters and human ancestor grandmothers." The author organizes the legend as follows: According to the legend, when Fuxi and Nuwa lived, the sky collapsed and water filled the sky. The kind-hearted Fuxi was informed in advance by a thousand-year-old white turtle, and he and his sister Nuwa hid themselves in the turtle's stomach. After seventy-nine days, the water finally receded, and only Fuxi and Nuwa were left in the world. The White Tortoise had to make the siblings get married and reproduce, but Fuxi and Nuwa refused to do so. Fuxi and Nuwa refused, so the White Tortoise had to ask the Heavenly Emperor to make a match. The Heavenly Emperor asked Fuxi and Nuwa to push down a mill from the east and west sides of the mountain, and if the mills were joined together at the bottom of the mountain, the siblings would be married. The stone mills were lowered from the top of the Kunlun Mountain three times and all three times they were put together. The two siblings had to get married in the evening of the same day. The traditional shape of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou "Straw Hat Tiger".



Figure 5 Straw Hat Tiger  
Source: <https://pic.sogou.com/d>

(As shown in the picture) is a reproduction of the situation at the time of Nuwa's marriage, when Nuwa covered her face with a lotus leaf because of her shyness. After their marriage, they felt that the world was too sparsely populated and that births were too slow. Nuwa then kneaded people out of clay, and the clay figures thus possessed Nuwa's aura, and after drying in the sun, they were able to walk, talk, and breathe, and became living, breathing human beings. Myths say that people were created by Nuwa from the yellow earth, so people call Fuxi the "Ancestral Master of Man" and Nuwa the "Ancestral Grandmother" or "Ancestral Grandmother of Man". In order to remember the merits of their ancestors, the descendants began to make all kinds of animals out of clay.

The development of the clay dog has gone through the Chinese dynasties, but there have been no obvious changes in shape and color, and the historical connotations expressed have not changed, and are mainly passed on from person to person by word of mouth. The main purpose of this period is to describe how the clay dog came into being, its origin and the social environment in which it lived at that time, which led to the emergence of the clay dog.

### 2.2.2 Periods of stagnation

In 1912, China's feudal society ended, and China was in a society of internal and external problems, experiencing a series of political, economic, and social changes that led to a stagnant situation for Ni-ni-gou during this period.

During this period, the Ni-ni-gou had some economic value, and people living in Huaiyang relied on making Ni-ni-gou for economic income. With the development of the times, Ni-ni-gou were nearly lost. During the Cultural Revolution, Ni-ni-gou were regarded as "four olds", and mud sculptors were inevitably criticized and



persecuted, and were classified into the ranks of the bulls, ghosts, snakes, and gods, and a large portion of their works were destroyed, which brought a great blow to the development of Ni-ni-gou. Li Xiushen, a craftsman from Huaiyang, was born in 1909 and is a famous artist of making Ni-ni-gou. He was a soldier of the Kuomintang and was persecuted during the Cultural Revolution, so he gave up making Ni-ni-gou for nearly 10 years and lived a life close to a hermit, as did most of the other artists in the village. This is undoubtedly a great blow to the inheritance of Ni-ni-gou. For a long period of time, the development of Ni-ni-gou stagnated and almost died out.

### **2.2.3 Period of refocusing**

Ni-ni-gou into the re-attention stage, after the reform and opening up in 1978, China's folk culture "hot" up, cultural roots again set off a new wave, this period enhanced the study of folk art Ni-ni-gou, Ni-ni-gou from the artistic value and cultural connotation of the Ni-ni-gou in-depth study. The state encourages the development of various undertakings, Ni-ni-gou again appeared in the public's field of vision, the director of the art department of Henan Provincial Museum of Mass Art, China Folk Craft Academic Committee member Ni Baocheng, over the years dedicated to the excavation of folk art resources in Henan Province, by chance to see the Ni-ni-gou works from Huaiyang, was very interested in the Ni-ni-gou, they came to Huaiyang field survey, visit Ni-ni-gou artists, and then after the documentary evidence to determine that the Ni-ni-gou art form originated in the ancient period, reflecting the artistic value and cultural connotations of Ni-ni-gou, the Ni-ni-gou is a form of art, which is a form of art. In April 1994, the local government established the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou Association to gather and exhibit the works of famous Ni-ni-gou artists in the county and encourage them to fabricate Ni-ni-gou again, and the art of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang has been developed again. From then on, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou art was developed again, and the Ni-ni-gou art in this period still kept the simple and ancient modeling style, and the artists would even compete with each other. After the development of the times, people's lifestyles change, the development of Ni-ni-gou is also affected by the impact of the emergence of a variety of novelty toys, so that the Ni-ni-gou this ancient art of mud sculpture is no longer so much needed by people. More ways to make money, pinching the Ni-ni-gou artists also began to convert the way to get economic income, or go out to work, or run transportation and so on. The number of artists who make Ni-ni-gou has been greatly reduced.

### **2.2.4 Period of rural revitalization**

With the Third Plenary Session of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) held in 2017, the CPC put forward the strategy of rural revitalization, and the No. 1 document of the Central Committee in 2018 specifically pointed out that "traditional culture should be actively inherited, rural culture should be developed, the excellent achievements of foreign cities should be drawn on, and in the process of inheriting traditional culture, creative development and creative transformation should be carried out. ". The "Strategic Plan for Rural Revitalization (2018-2022)"<sup>2</sup> Chapter 23 of the Central Leading Group for Rural

<sup>2</sup> CPC Central Committee State Council. Opinions on the implementation of rural revitalization strategy [EB/OL].

[http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-02/04/c\\_1122366449.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2018-02/04/c_1122366449.htm), 2018-02-04.

Work clearly states that the traditional culture of the countryside should be protected and utilized, the cultural ecology of the countryside should be reshaped, and the cultural industry of the countryside should be developed, which is the central government's attention to the position and function of the excellent traditional culture of the countryside in China's development.

With a series of national policies to support the cause of non-heritage in rural areas to help, Ni-ni-gou art has a wider space for development, but also facing the development of the era brought about by the inheritance of the predicament, electronic products, entertainment programs and other attractive visual content filled people's lives, crowded non-heritage cultural survival space, the public for the demand for diversified products and Ni-ni-gou form the existence of a single cultural form of contradiction, government departments to introduce appropriate policies to take active protection of non-heritage culture, this folk art has gradually become more and more experts, scholars and people's attention. There is a contradiction between the public's demand for diversified products and the single cultural form of Ni-ni-gou, which needs to be reconciled urgently, and the government departments have introduced corresponding policies to actively protect the non-heritage culture, and the folk art of Ni-ni-gou has gradually received more and more attention from experts, scholars and the public. For many years, there have been special sales stalls for Ni-ni-gou on the square of Taihao Mausoleum, which is a beautiful scenery line in Fu Xi culture of Huaiyang. Inheritance people also slowly according to the market demand to make corresponding changes and innovations, in order to adapt to the market, the function of this period of Ni-ni-gou from the previous "mud toys", "ancestor sacred objects" to the work of "art ornaments", "exhibits", "gifts" and other directions to extend the connotation. Non-heritage artists of Ni-ni-gou heritage and publicity also make Ni-ni-gou gradually out of Huaiyang, out of Henan, out of the country, organized in large folk art fairs around the country, often Ni-ni-gou figure.



Figure 6 Ni-ni-gou Participates in Folk Art Fair Promotion  
Source: <https://baidu.com/d>

## 2.3 Artistic Value and Cultural Connotation of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou

### 2.3.1. Artistic value of clay dogs: shape, pattern, color, production process

Ni-ni-gou is a kind of practical and aesthetic combination of artifact-making activities carried out by the working people in the process of interacting with nature. The visual art characteristics it possesses are the externalized manifestation of Huaiyang regional culture, reflecting the art creation spirit and aesthetic sense of the forefathers, which is of unique significance in the process of the development of human aesthetic consciousness. In the shapes, colors and patterns of Ni-ni-gou, the strong cultural concepts and the pursuit of beauty of the ancestors permeate, and they have their own unique aesthetic interests. The artistic value of Ni-ni-gou can be said to be profound and unique. It records the unique charm of this traditional folk art of clay sculpture with weird artistic shapes, mottled colors and mysterious abstract symbols. It is not only an artistic reproduction of real life, but also carries profound meanings such as praying for blessings and reproducing offspring in ancient times, and is also a symbol of totem culture. Through artistic and diversified aesthetic connotations, the Ni-ni-gou inherits the Fuxi culture and the theme of racial reproduction of primitive art, which has been passed down for thousands of years, and demonstrates the pursuit of human nature's truth, goodness and beauty, as well as the unique artistic beauty of mud sculpture art. Whether it is modeling or decoration, have experienced the transition from totem worship to reproduction worship, a true record of the development of totem culture and human reproduction culture trajectory, was hailed by experts as "the living fossil of ancient totem worship". Ni-ni-gou is not only the crystallization of wisdom of folk artists, but also the emergence of their spiritual cultivation, carrying the good wishes of people to borrow objects to convey love, entertainment and education, and welcome blessings and auspiciousness, with high social and artistic value.

For the artistic value of mud Ni-ni-gou were analyzed in terms of shape, pattern, color, and production process.

### ①Modeling

The image of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" has a kind of tension, thick, simple, atmospheric, and very strong sense of volume, unpredictable shape, and powerful brushwork. The various shapes of "Ni-ni-gou" in Huaiyang have their own folklore, and they are not made up randomly for the purpose of making "Ni-ni-gou". The reason why the style of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" has such a charm is that it is the image that serves the content and is shaped by the artists. Its shape and expressed content are very cleverly integrated, containing the original strange folk stories, but also the existence of a strong color of contemporary art, no matter from the subject matter or the type of clay dog reflects the unique shape of the charm of the clay dog.

The division is made in terms of subject matter and is divided into the following categories:

Ni-ni-gou theme performance is very wide, mostly for the image of strange birds and beasts and gods and monsters, is not a common life of livestock or birds and beasts, there are about several hundred kinds, which reflects the ancient times of man and beast coexistence of the state of life.

Regardless of the wide range of themes, the reproductive worship from the primitive to the present day is an eternal theme, which is now manifested as "praying for children to seek blessings" and "dispelling evils to bring good fortune", such as through the "mother and child monkeys", "multi-headed beasts", "human ancestor monkeys", "two-headed birds" and other images to pray for the prosperity of children and grandchildren, people and animals. Their mysterious, illusory, ancient and strange shapes are the same as those of the many gods and goddesses recorded in the Classic of Mountains and Seas, and as a material for creation, which does not exist in real life, this kind of aesthetic imagination seems to have no boundaries, but fundamentally guides the human mind, and what can be seen in these simple, ancient, and strange shapes is precisely the unique and special flavor of the Chinese traditional folk art.

(1) Monstrous and strange beasts: the most distinctive features of the Ni-ni-gou in a class, the theme of the combination of styles, the whole full of bizarre colors, is to reflect the characteristics of the primitive age of ignorance of a class of Ni-ni-gou in the shape of the most exaggerated and grotesque, full of mysterious atmosphere, such as "human ancestor of monkeys", "conjoined beasts", "multi-headed beasts" and other exotic subjects, not only the external features are distinctive, but also penetrate the consciousness of the primitive ancestors in the spirit of worship and hope for a better life. This kind of clay dog is the most exaggerated and grotesque in shape, full of mysterious atmosphere, such as "human ancestor monkey", "Siamese beast", "multi-headed beast" and other exotic beasts, which not only have distinctive external features, but also permeate the spiritual worship and beautiful expectation of life in the consciousness of the primitive forefathers.

(2) Reproduction worship: Through various animals and beasts as carriers to express the spiritual pursuit and desire of human beings for reproduction, it is a kind of external totem symbols and metaphorical modeling to convey the spiritual will of the people, and this kind of theme also alludes to Fuxi and Nuwa, and together they teach people about the creation of human beings who are born and reproduced. This kind of theme has gone through the process of female worship to male worship, and



then from male worship to equal worship for men and women, and the theme often has a strong implication and metaphorical meaning, such as the "monkey with a human face".



Figure 7 Sphinx Monkey

Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

"Monkey" also refers to women in Ni-ni-gou, and the evolution of the worship of women from the worship of women to the worship of men through the use of "monkey" is also evidence of the evolution of human beings from matrilineal clans to patrilineal clans. In the ancient times, due to the human beings are full of confusion and unknown about the natural world, the human beings are full of old age, sickness and death, prompting the people to worship the women who can continue the life of the race, and the women's status is higher in this period, and later, with the human beings' improved understanding of the natural world, they gradually realized that the men are also playing an extremely important role in the continuation of the ethnic groups and the men are mostly the strong images in the tribes, and the male worship has been strengthened in this period. Strengthened. Later on, the worship of men evolved into the worship of equality between men and women, which is also the process of the patriarchal clan's development towards modern equality between men and women, and the gradual advancement from confusion to modern civilization. In the 70's and 80's, there was a belief that a family with a lot of grandchildren was a symbol of good fortune, which was also in line with the connotation of fertility worship in the Ni-ni-gou. These spiritual beliefs are part of people's ideology and life, and to a certain extent, they influence the concept of the family and family morals and ethics.

(3) Theme category of opera: Henan not only has many folk arts, but also the culture of opera is very popular among local people and even people in neighboring provinces and cities. Yu opera is easy to understand and infectious, every year during the temple fair of Tai Hao mausoleum, the local government will ask the famous Yu

opera troupe to come to Tai Hao mausoleum to sing, enriching the spiritual life of the local people, the local mud sculptors also learn from all the strengths of the art form of the opera to boldly learn and learn from the plot of the Yu opera that people are happy to see and see, through the mud Ni-ni-gou this art form skillful performance and interpretation, such as in the opera of the "Wu Sung fights the tiger", "Legend of the White Snake", "Cowherd and Weaving Maiden" and other subjects, various art forms draw on each other, draw on each other's essence, is a common technique of artistic creation, further strengthening its artistic characteristics and contemporary flavor. This is a common technique in artistic creation, further strengthening its artistic characteristics and contemporary connotation.

(4) Auspicious Allegory: Auspicious allegorical themes, more reflective of the modern people's spiritual pursuit and beliefs and worship, in many Chinese cultures, there is the performance and application of auspicious allegorical themes, clothing culture, ceramic art, painting and calligraphy field have such themes. Artists often combine and transform the art forms through the harmonic characters in idioms, and express specific themes through the metaphorical animal images in idioms, such as immediately sealing the "Husband", big "tangerine" Dali, "Lotus", "Lian", "Lunar New Year", "Lucky", "Lucky" and "Lucky". "Year with" fish "and so on, there are animals as a creative element to animal metaphor, often through two, more than one animal and plant or other things combined to express a particular theme, a double entendre, very cultural connotation. In short, it can be seen from the auspicious and allegorical themes that the public has shifted from the most basic demands for survival and reproduction to a more diversified, high-level yearning for and pursuit of a better life, reflecting the changes in the public's psychology.

(5) Zodiac: The twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac have been used as materials for expression in various cultural fields since ancient times, and in recent years, they have also been reflected in clay dogs. In ancient China, the ancestors used the twelve earthly branches and twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac to match, and people could calculate their age through their phases. Ni-ni-gou artists on the performance of the twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac are quite distinctive and connotative meaning, there are some artists on the twelve signs of the Chinese zodiac for a single performance, its budding, interesting treatment, this theme in recent years by many consumers love, is the Ni-ni-gou products in the sales of a class of high products.





Figure 8 Chinese Zodiac  
Source: Photo by the author himself

(6) Realistic themes: The artistic elements of realistic themes are mostly from the environment and production activities of people's lives, such as "chickens", "goats", "cows" and other animals and plants in the family, and many other scenes of life, which are characterized by more figurative forms and close to people's lives. Plants, arable land and many other scenes of life, this kind of theme is characterized by a more concrete form and close to people's lives, from this kind of theme can let people have more empathy, contains the cultural connotation of the times and the epitome of the farming culture of the Central Plains.

The division is made in terms of types, which are categorized as single, composite, and hybrid:

(1) single-type: a single animal as a modeling, independent existence, not connected with any animal, combination or composite modeling. Such as "unicorn", "straw hat tiger", "human ancestor monkey", "gossip tortoise" belongs to a single type of modeling. People in the creation, whether it is the shape of the molding, or the pattern of painting, the whole process is based on the intuitive feeling of artists to create, so the Ni-ni-gou whether it is from the modeling or pattern look through a stream of primitive and rugged art charm.

(2) composite: clay dog in the composite generally refers to two or more modeling, this composite modeling peculiar and rich, can be the same kind of animal composite, can also be a heterogeneous animal composite, such as "monkeys riding the beast", "nine unicorns" and so on are Belong to the composite type, through the modeling of the way between each other composite, to express a specific worship ideas.

(3) Mixed type: Mixed type is a relatively uncommon type in the modeling of clay dogs, and this kind of theme is often made by the mixture of two species, such as "man riding a beast", "fish with human face", "monkey with human face" and other images, all of which express the important role of man in nature through the fusion of

human and animal modeling. This type of theme is often made by mixing two species, such as "man riding a beast", "man-faced fish", "man-faced monkey", etc. All these images express the important role of man in the natural world through the modeling of the fusion of man and animal. There is also a category of "four unlike" subject matter, "four unlike" refers to the animal body and head, but there is no common facial features of the clay dog, like a square, like a round, not round, exactly a face with a cross symbols of the clay ball modeling.

Ni-ni-gou in the modeling characteristics of distinctive features, each Ni-ni-gou for the artist to fabricate, but it still has the corresponding modeling paradigm and composition law. The modeling of Ni-ni-gou, both from real life, but has transcended the reality of the natural form, is based on the reality of the artists to imagine, is the reproduction of intuitive artistry. This kind of weird modeling between the real and the imaginary, both ancient and mysterious, releases a kind of primitive charm of totem art.

## ②Patterns

There are many varieties of decorative patterns in Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou", and most of these traditional patterns come from the accumulation and refinement of traditional folk artists' life experiences and inheritance, and the mud sculptures reflect the artists' passion for life and traditional handicrafts. Among them, the patterns of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are closely related to the spiritual needs of paying homage to ancestors, entertaining the gods, and praying for heirs, and most of the decorative patterns are the symbols of reproduction extended from the exaggerated deformation of the genital organs, and their forms are similar to floral patterns. The use of these decorative patterns is a kind of mapping of its essential content, and succession is the core of the connotation of mud Ni-ni-gou. These symbols depicted in Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" show a fierce desire for fertility worship. Ni-ni-gou pattern constitutes a variety, and there is no stable drawing paradigm, generally for the clay artists for the theme of styling characteristics of the random increase or creation, roughly divided into the core pattern and auxiliary pattern.

Core patterns: the most commonly used patterns in the composition of Ni-ni-gou patterns. The most prominent pattern of Ni-ni-gou is female yin pattern, generally used to show female reproductive worship, almost every Ni-ni-gou works will contain female yin pattern, in the expression of reproductive worship pattern, there are mainly female reproductive worship, male reproductive worship two kinds of Ni-ni-gou is not only pattern modeling has the corresponding theme category, but also very metaphorical meaning, female yin pattern is the expression of the spirit of the early matriarchal clan of mankind's spiritual worship, general Vertical straight lines in the middle, the second and third layers of symmetrical arcs, the outermost circle for the expression of the launch-like lines. On the color law, the middle straight line is generally red, the second layer is yellow, the outermost layer is green color law, but it is not mandatory to follow the steps of coloring, and there will be subtle differences between different artists. Ni-ni-gou's magnificent decorations are not only iconic in their artistic features, but also unique in their connotations.

Auxiliary patterns; that is, the Ni-ni-gou pattern composition to do decorative patterns, there are more types of Ni-ni-gou, but auxiliary patterns appear relatively low frequency, and does not have the main pattern of that kind of stability, artists are generally based on the content of the subject matter of the randomly drawn, the main



role in order to support a particular theme. In general, the Ni-ni-gou decorative symbols and its styling theme is highly unified, the perfect combination of form and content, that is, through the decorative metaphor for people's spiritual pursuits, but also with deformation, exaggeration, unique stylistic artistic representations, its inherent stability and inheritance and the rugged modeling, the regularity of the decorations complement each other, this artistic expression can also be borrowed for the performance of contemporary art, and the advantages of its integration into the creation of modern works. This artistic expression can also be used as a reference for contemporary art, and its advantages can be integrated into the creation of contemporary works.

The decorative patterns of Ni-ni-gou are generally divided into core patterns and auxiliary patterns, and according to the characteristics of individual patterns can be divided into floral patterns, dotted lines, triangular patterns, sun patterns, female yin patterns, horseshoe patterns, fish patterns, diamond patterns, leaf patterns and so on.

Sunburst pattern - as the name suggests - is a pattern shaped like the sun, created and developed over thousands of years from primitive society. Sunburst is a symbol of ancient patterns, created and developed from the primitive society for thousands of years, it inherits the history and culture, and is a typical representative of traditional Chinese visual art symbols, the sunburst culture contains the Chinese primitive view of the universe, and its art form also reflects the Chinese aesthetic.

The surface of the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is painted with white lines in a circle, with dots inside and ripples outside, forming a sunburst pattern, some of which are depicted as the eyes of the "Ni-ni-gou" and some of which are depicted on the back of the "Ni-ni-gou". Some are depicted as the eyes of the "Ni-ni-gou" and some are depicted on its back. In ancient history, both Western and Eastern art considered the sun to be very sacred. Secondly, the sun also represents vitality, vitality, essence, energy and leadership and even symbolizes majesty, courage, creativity, knowledge and ego. Primitive people feel that the sun is like a human being with a soul, with sorrow and joy, thus forming the sun has a soul statement. Later, people gradually personified it as God. Thus, the reverence for the sun is popular in most regions and tribes in the world. Not only Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" modeling on the



Figure 9 Sunburst

Source: Photo by the author himself



There are sun patterns in many cultural relics excavated from history, such as the sun patterns on the surface of colored pottery pots and the sun patterns in the rock paintings of Huashan in Ningming, Guangxi. There are also some ethnic minority festivals and folklore activities in which the sun is revered.

Dots and lines--Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are painted black, and the rest of the colors are expressed by dots and lines. The dots are often neatly arranged in the same color, and so are the lines. The different colors, in the process of detailed depiction, are usually different in width, curvature, urgency, thickness, length, and so on, constituting stripes, which are very strongly decorated. "Ni-ni-gou" is usually not a large portrayal, mostly depicted with dots and lines, points and lines are the basic units of the "Ni-ni-gou" pattern, a forest of round dots, square dots, big dots, small dots, long lines, short lines, the use of dots and lines to a very high level, is the best illustration of the use of dots and lines. the best illustration of the use of dots and lines. Dots can form both the lines and the surface of a pattern; dots can be used to reproduce the brightness, depth and layers of a pattern to obtain an exquisite and delicate effect. The directionality of space and length constitute the main characteristics of a line. Long lines have a sense of continuity, speed and movement time, while short lines have a sense of intermittent, slow movement; thick lines are thick and thick and sturdy, while thin lines are light and sharp; straight lines are clear, concise and sharp, giving a sense of urgency, speed and power, full of emotional qualities of masculine character. This unique pattern of dots and lines on the Henan Ni-ni-gou not only successfully expresses the characteristics of various patterns, conveys the beautiful long-cherished wishes, and sends people's inner longing and emotions, but also realistically maps out the primitive society's belief in totem worship, and conveys the folk beauty of the Chinese nation.



*Figure 10 Dotted Line*

**Source: Photo by the author himself**

Flower and grass pattern--After analyzing and understanding the flowers, plants and trees in the nature and the expectation of a better life in our hearts, we draw on the natural and exquisite flower and grass pattern to present them one by one, and at the same time, according to the traditional pattern collocation for the use of the corresponding pattern, the main form is expressed in the form of plump and rounded flowers, with auxiliary leaves and other smallized The main form is full and round flowers, with auxiliary leaves and other small points and undulating natural lines, the combination of points and lines contrasts the overall decorative pattern form.

Flower and grass pattern is generally more realistic, Huaiyang ancient name Wanqiu, Chenzhou, the history of five times to build the capital, a very long history,

is one of the birthplaces of Chinese culture, people's production and life and nature are closely linked to the daily life of the beautiful things, beliefs and cults to the Ni-ni-gou, borrowing things flowers and plants to express the heart's good wishes. Flower and grass pattern is a very common pattern on the Ni-ni-gou, the pattern in the middle of a point to represent the heart of the flower, around the point with a curved line to draw the petals, and then use the point to do the decorations, and finally with different lengths of lines to show the leaves.



Figure 11 Floral pattern

**Source: Photo by the author himself**

Nymphs - There is also a pattern on the "Ni-ni-gou" in the shape of a date palm in its abdominal cavity, layer by layer, with red, white, yellow and green lines, drawn on a black background, with hair-like lines on the outer layer. The character of the female genitalia is very clearly realized. The "Ni-ni-gou" has an abstract shape, but the decorative motifs are depicted very realistically. Usually painted on the lower part of the animal, the meaning of the shape of the tattoos confirms its ancient and primitive connotations from a visual psychological point of view. These tattoos, the worship of female reproduction, which also symbolizes the respect for women. It allows human beings to perceive the world in the true sense of inner symbols and physical symbols, conveying people's belief and respect. It is the human soul and awareness that transcends the constraints of material life as well as of the movement mind, so that the unfolding and occurrence of mental representations and the mutual transformations of the various levels of consciousness form a psychological fact on which the fantasy of the spiritual world is born beyond the human state of existence.

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Figure 12 Feminine lines  
Source: Photo by the author himself

### ③Color

Traditional Chinese folk handicrafts tend to use bold, bright and vibrant colors, such as kites, lanterns, horse spoon faces, cloth tigers and so on, which may be the aesthetic structure of the peasants in their long-term natural life. The audience is also ordinary people living in various social strata. These traditional folk handicrafts are often used in some specific occasions and scenes. These bright colors and patterns are used to fill the heart and delight the mood, directly and frankly. Ni-ni-gou mainly use black, white, red, yellow and cyan colors. On the body of the black Ni-ni-gou, patterns and motifs with specific connotations and forms are drawn in red, yellow, cyan and white. The overall picture is very rich in patterns, with strong contrasts and a sense of harmony. The use of the colors of the Ni-ni-gou also reflects the free power of the people's artists, there is no specific form of the picture, you can draw patterns according to your own preferences and creative characteristics. In a sense, color gives us a more powerful visual perception and psychological suggestion than shape, because color plays an important role in identifying and distinguishing things. The construction of color genres is inextricably linked to people's daily perceptual activities, and it stems from the external atmosphere, and therefore from the psychological emotions generated by color changes. China in ancient times began to use black, in Fu Xi created the Taiji Bagua in the "gossip" for the left black and right white color composition, gossip in the West for the "White Tiger", the East for the "Green Dragon ", the south for the "Vermilion Bird", the north for the "Xuanwu", respectively, distributed in the southeast, northwest and north of China, and the traditional five colors can be summed up in all the colors of the natural world of heaven and earth, all other colors are born from the five-color, visible five-color! All other colors are derived from the five colors, so it is clear that the five colors have a cultural origin since ancient times. Ni-ni-gou's use of color is premised on the construction of the "five-color concept". The five-color concept is an aesthetic concept that allows individuals to sublimate natural colors into philosophical and ideal colors. In ancient Chinese aesthetics, the five colors have a metaphysical expression and play a crucial role in the interaction between heaven and man, as a means of obtaining auspicious symbolism. As a result, the color aesthetic structure of the five-color view is dominant in the folk art genre, using a variety of combinations to create a unique effect that is strong, warm, heavy, and beautiful.



Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is mainly painted by five colors: black, white, red, yellow and blue, which are the "five elements" in our traditional painting. Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are black at the bottom, and then use the higher brightness and purity of red, yellow, blue, white, blue five elements of color painting various decorative patterns, with the black color of the calm, solemn to highlight the "Ni-ni-gou" bright and colorful, strong contrast! It makes the "Ni-ni-gou" lively without losing the stability and atmosphere. The color is simple and bright, generous and casual, with black to set off the relationship between other colors. From the point of view of color, black color reflects the least light. The use of black as the base color of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" reminds us of the origin of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou". The colors of red, yellow, green and white drawn on the black background imply vitality.

First of all, black pavement - Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" flat black as the bottom color, red, yellow, green, white, black, the use of dots and lines to express the way. The dots and lines are mostly placed side by side with the same color, and the different colors, in the process of detailed depiction, change in width, thickness, curvature, urgency, length, and so on, constitute stripes, with a strong decorative effect. In addition, the patterns and colors of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" do not have a set form, depending on the artist's sense of creation and experience, because of this, in the visual Ni-ni-gou have a strong local flavor and a special folk art style. Archaeological data show that in ancient Chinese culture, black has always been considered solemn, sacred and a symbol of life, and has been endowed with sublime symbolic meaning. Neolithic pottery production mostly in black as the main color, the excavated pottery black patterns and decorations mostly contain religious symbolism. Today, there is still widespread black worship in China, and many witchcraft rituals have blackened the body to drive away evil spirits and pray for good luck, which is a symbol of good luck. Today living in Guangxi Nanyang County of Black Zhuang, still advocate black, black as the symbol of the nation, calling themselves black for the beauty of the nation. The black clothes worn by the Black Clothes Strong are believed to be able to drive away ghosts and evil spirits. Due to the more complete historical and cultural inheritance of the Black Clothes Strong, this custom has been passed down for thousands of years, which is a remnant of the ancient black style. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou have been made in black for thousands of years, which is a custom left over from the ancient history.

Secondly, the color contrast - the color of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is colorful, strong color contrast, black against the higher brightness and purity of the color, the shape is simple and the color is vivid. The use of the color of "Ni-ni-gou" is not based on the research of color, but is based on the long experience of the folk inheritors and the simple aesthetic characteristics of the color. Even in the "mud Ni-ni-gou" color also left a lot of color does not match the current aesthetic use, such as "red away from the green is not conspicuous, purple away from the yellow is not conspicuous" and other special color theory. But it is precisely this kind of color use without reconciliation, so that the "Ni-ni-gou" produced an elegant and coordinated form, constituting a kind of elegant and popular art characteristics.

The five colors unique to the Ni-ni-gou are red, green, yellow, white and black, and the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" has black as its base color, and the decorative patterns on its body are drawn in the four colors of red, green, yellow and white. The combination of the five colors matches the historical concept of the five elements of

color, which include the five components or elements of gold, wood, water, fire and earth. These five components can represent everything in the world, and the five components are either extinguished or born from each other, reflecting the philosophical idea that everything in the world is born. Early mankind believed that there was a close relationship between these five colors and life and work, so in ancient times these five colors were highly valued by the people, called the "right color", and was given a variety of good luck, hope, good fortune, peace and other good symbolism. A series of concepts about the five colors, such as the five tones in music, the five organs in Chinese medicine, and the five grains in agriculture, have also been created as a result. These concepts have a direct impact on the formation of the color system of traditional folk art in China, and the use of colors in the folk art of "Ni-ni-gou" is a continuation of the traditional five-color doctrine.

Lastly, the imagery is carried by folk artists who make the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" with their own hearts and hands, abstracting and generalizing in a casual and free manner. The decorative patterns are all in place with one stroke, clean, and drawn in the most concise way. The artists fabricate the "Ni-ni-gou" from their own understanding of the concept of beauty, and at the same time, they also express the beautiful hope of praying for a happy life, avoiding harm and driving away disasters, etc. in their creations of totem worship. The combination of colors and special shapes, which give special meanings and inner meanings, realizes the combination of faith and art.

#### ④ Making process

Clay sculpture is a traditional art form of Chinese folklore, commonly known as "color sculpture" and "clay play". Clay, water and mud are used as materials to shape various artistic images. Due to the strong viscosity of clay and the relative ease of obtaining materials, it has become an important form of folk art expression, and has developed into numerous forms through a long history of development. They are shaped by hand, and depending on the shape, they are both painted and unpainted, with most of them featuring figures and animals. Most of them are figures and animals, ranging from large temple statues to small table settings and children's toys. Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is one of the important parts, and the production process is very elaborate.

The whole Ni-ni-gou from the beginning of the production to the completion of the production of the whole length of time is relatively long, will make the production of Ni-ni-gou craftsmen have some concerns, because the local Huayang is more focused on agriculture, the production of Ni-ni-gou Huayang craftsmen need to take into account the family's farm work whether there is a conflict, so many craftsmen are in their spare time to carry out the production of Ni-ni-gou. The making of Ni-ni-gou mainly includes the following steps:

(1) Mud picking: The kneading and molding materials for "Ni-ni-gou" come from the unique local clay, which is known as yellow rubber clay (clay), sticky and easy to knead, very delicate and containing less sand, malleable, durable and stable, which is an ideal natural material for the production of Ni-ni-gou. The local layer of yellow clay is generally about one meter and a half from the surface, so picking clay is a time-consuming and laborious task.





Figure 13 Yellow gum clay  
Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

(2) playing clay: when playing clay, use a wooden stick, constantly pounding clay, repeatedly pounding, trying to clay balance, meticulous, toughness, like and rolling block, in the pounding, to constantly add some water, so as to make the clay to keep wet, uniform, delicate, elastic. If the clay particles are uneven in thickness, there is no way to shape; the clay is fluffy and easy to pinch and mold, but at the same time very easy to deform; the clay is too hard and not easy to pinch; the number of times of pounding is not enough, and the finished product is easy to dry and crack. If it is a sealed dry collodion, you have to use a hard tool to break all the pieces of clay, and spray it with water to let the water penetrate into the clay, and then proceed to make and whack the clay. If the wet mastic is dug out of the ground, it can be placed directly on a stone mill and pounded and kneaded. Relative to the dry rubber clay block, wet rubber clay block operation is relatively less complicated, the rubber clay block repeatedly kneaded, like kneading, the rubber clay kneaded after the nature of the rubber clay is more soft, and does not stick to the hand, do not break, kneading mud kneading good in the sun after drying will also be more convenient for the color. From the surface of the feeling is very simple things, do very difficult, which contains a lot of subtle changes and technical means. Nowadays, there are clay machines that can save a lot of physical labor, but the cost of the machine is expensive, and most artists and the amount of clay is less, so it is still mainly manual and clay.

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Figure 14 Mudding

Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

(3) Pinch molding: pinch molding. Pinch molding is the key to making clay dogs.

Rub the rubber clay, is an important part of the production of Ni-ni-gou, and very careful, dig a good piece of the right amount of rubber clay, in the hands of repeated rubbing and kneading, will be rolled into a long strip, and then on this basis will be the Ni-ni-gou limbs and head pinch out in this part of the need for uniform force to shape the Ni-ni-gou's shape to ensure that the molding of the Ni-ni-gou to be able to stand up smoothly. In addition to hand-pinching billet, in the current market, clay artists have gradually begun to use molds for clay dog "billet" production, with the mold production is fast and convenient, but generally small clay dog with molds for the production of large-scale clay dog is still inherited by the people hand-pinching.

Ni-ni-gou mud blank production is divided into three ways: 1. completely handmade; 2. completely molded; 3. half handmade, half molded. The first completely handmade pinch, pinch molding is to rely on the feeling of the hand to determine its size, pick up a piece of hammered clay, in the hands of the pinch made in the heart of the size and shape of the desired "Ni-ni-gou", the initial shape out of the form, and then the sorghum rod to make local adjustments, after the delicate carving, and finally placed in the shade to air-dry.





**Figure 15 Pinch Molding**  
**Source: Photo by the author himself**

The second type is completely molded. First, according to the size of the clay dog, take out the right amount of clay dough, knead it on a smooth stone slab to form a blank similar to the finished product, and then mold the clay into the desired shape by hand. Currently, small Ni-ni-gou are made in molds, where the kneaded gelatinous clay is stuffed into a plaster mold and squeezed hard enough to flatten the edges and back. The third kind of half handmade, half molded, the first use of the production of good molds for molding, there are a variety of materials such as collodion molds, plaster molds, foam molds, etc., will be rubbed billet into the mold inside, evenly pressed hard, will be smoothed out around the periphery of the collodion, and then the craftsmen according to the different shapes to be pinched to complete the unique shape of the Ni-ni-gou.



**Figure 16 Molding**  
**Source: Photo by the author himself**



(4) Drilling: Drilling should be done in time on the freshly pinched blanks, when the clay is softest and easy to drill. Slow mud becomes dry and hard, drilling is relatively troublesome. Drill holes generally use bamboo sticks or wire rotary drilling, drilling this ring seems simple but the Ni-ni-gou production is an important part of the mud, after drilling the Ni-ni-gou can be blown out of a simple and loud sound. Finally, the drilled Ni-ni-gou is placed in a cool place to dry.

(5) Dyeing black: The coloring of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is quite different from that of other places. This step is to dye the clay dogs black. In the past, the pigment used for dyeing was made by mixing malt juice and pot ash with water, which was more economical. Most of the people in the villages who made Ni-ni-gou did the same thing. Later, some of the makers added the black color used for dyeing clothes to the skin glue, poured it into a cauldron and boiled it with water for a few times until the pigment completely melted, and then left it to cool naturally. Or put the "Ni-ni-gou" in a large vessel, from top to bottom pouring black dye, repeated a few times, the mud sculpture dyed all over the body of the bird black, one by one and then dry. Although this saves costs, but the whole process is more cumbersome, time-consuming and laborious, and the dyeing is easy to appear uneven phenomenon. So now many craftsmen use acrylics when dyeing Ni-ni-gou black. Acrylic is easy to buy, cheap, and the dyeing is more even.



Figure 17 Black coloring

Source: Photo by the author himself

(6) Dot painting: After the "Ni-ni-gou" is blackened, the artists will dot paint some decorative patterns. The brush used for dot painting is the sorghum stalks planted in the villagers' fields, and the sorghum stalks are cut into bevels, and the colors are dotted in accordance with the shape of the "Ni-ni-gou". "Three parts molding, seven parts dyeing", from which we can see that the point of painting is the most important and most exquisite part of the process of "mud Ni-ni-gou". After the black "Ni-ni-gou" is completely dried, folk artists use red, yellow, white, green and other colors to paint various decorative patterns. Select different thicknesses of sorghum stalks as a pen, the core of the sorghum stalks can absorb the color, easy for

artists to control the intensity of the color, but also has a simple texture. "Point" out of the brush strokes of varying thickness, "point" painting should focus on controlling the direction of the tip of the brush, the power and the amount of paint on the pen, too little is painted lines appear dry, rough, no strength, too much is not easy to grasp the thickness of the lines. Artists in accordance with their own preferences, painted decorative pattern modeling differences, some astringent and cautious, some stretching fullness. All of them are out of the calm and fullness of the heart, no matter how to draw have a sense of simplicity and rusticity. Nowadays, with advertising colors and brushes are very economical. The advertisement colors, such as black or brown, are used as a base, and after drying, they can be hand-painted in color, and then sprayed with varnish to enhance the glossiness of the "Ni-ni-gou". Previously, the artist himself processed, some in order to enhance the "mud Ni-ni-gou" brightness, such as color drying, and then coated with a layer of egg white on the surface, to protect the efficacy of its color, but also will greatly enhance the "mud Ni-ni-gou" color brightness. "Ni-ni-gou" scholars concluded that "Ni-ni-gou" and the ancient totem culture is closely related, it is inherited in the present most ancient "plastic" and "colored" It is one of the most perfect representatives of the most ancient "plastic" and "color" fusion, which is also the witness of early culture and art in China, and is the continuation and expansion of a primitive totem civilization, which gives people an eternal memory of life.



Figure 18 Stippling

Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

(7) Drying and molding. Ni-ni-gou drying molding is a key step in the production process. After the coloring is completed, it is necessary to dry the Ni-ni-gou again, the Ni-ni-gou drying can not be directly exposed to the sun, direct exposure to the sun is easy to make the Ni-ni-gou dry and cracked. Should be good coloring Ni-ni-gou placed in the place without direct sunlight for shade drying. Therefore, the clay dog drying molding is an indispensable part of the production of clay works. It not only concerns the quality of the work, but also affects the artistic value and ornamental of the work. Through exquisite skills and patience, artists can create both beautiful and sturdy clay dog works, so that this traditional folk art can be passed on and carried forward.





Figure 19 Drying out  
Source: Photo by the author himself

### 2.3.2. Cultural connotations of Ni-ni-gou: totems, beliefs, symbols

As a unique folk art form, the Ni-ni-gou carries the primitive worship and spiritual beliefs of the ancient ancestors in the form of material, and is the praise and pursuit of life by the ancestors. By many experts and scholars called "original art", "living fossil", "real totem", its ancient mysterious art form in contemporary unique, contains an inestimable cultural research value. In the era of human-animal coexistence, when our ancestors expressed their inner demands, they often did so in a very direct and frank way, expressing their inner demands and aspirations through external obvious forms. But this kind of thinking is positive, kind and simple, although it may be mixed with some utilitarian appeals that seem to be a little bit to avoid harm, but this is the most core, basic wishes of the people. Ni-ni-gou have developed from ancient times to today, and their function has evolved from the initial as a sacred object to worship Fuxi Nuwa, to a bridge and carrier that communicates between ancient civilization and modern civilization. Its tangible record of primitive worship is of great significance to our exploration of ancient civilization today. As an artistic imprint of national culture, the connotation of Ni-ni-gou has been continuously extended in different historical periods and backgrounds. The unique folk culture of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" embodies the concept of life and survival of human beings, forming a unique regional folk art. The creation of shape, the original accumulation of patterns, and the unique concept of color have all become the artistic elements that must be present in the cultural inheritance. However, the primitive characteristics of Ni-ni-gou in the current era can not perfect the historical mission it should carry, in the contemporary consumer era Ni-ni-gou art form does not meet the majority of people's aesthetics, the lack of cultural identity, Ni-ni-gou most of the Ni-ni-gou from the family workshop, did not form a complete system, resulting in a variety of different types of Ni-ni-gou, affecting the image of the public perception of the Ni-ni-gou, and thus affecting the development of the Ni-ni-gou as a whole.

As a kind of primitive culture and art, Ni-ni-gou continues to draw on the connotation of the times in its development, and its cultural value continues to be extended. In today's continuous dissemination and innovation, its cultural value will be magnified. The spiritual and cultural role it plays today cannot be ignored, and it plays an important role in continuing the national roots, harmonizing people's thoughts, enriching people's productive life, and further improving the cohesion of the Chinese nation. From the perspective of cultural heritage, this folk art of Ni-ni-gou embodies the spirit and aesthetics of the people on the one hand, and on the other hand, it also expresses the state of life and spiritual consciousness of the people nowadays, which is of great significance to the innovation and inheritance of Ni-ni-gou art. Whether it is the primitive modeling in the past or the more modern cultural theme modeling, all at a deeper level, reflecting the people's strong desire for a better life. Such as Ni-ni-gou in the "human ancestor monkey", "cat pull monkey" and other subjects such as modeling, showing people's most primitive spiritual and cultural aspirations. Its unique decoration also contains deep cultural value, such as "monkey strange beasts" and other subjects, showing the psychological characteristics of human beings in the struggle with nature in the hope that they are constantly strong. In the modern period, the theme of the work has evolved on the "auspicious symbolism class", also in the direct or euphemistic expression of the spirit of the Chinese nation. Ni-ni-gou visual art elements from a variety of dimensions, are flowing from the Chinese nation's unique feelings and history, this spiritual and cultural value and artistic aesthetic value, from ancient times to the present day, it is worthwhile for us to seriously explore and learn. In recent years, the state has vigorously carried out the protection of non-heritage culture, and the local community of Huaiyang has made a series of policy support and initiatives for the development of Fuxi culture and Huaiyang's folk culture, vigorously assisting non-heritage artists to publicize their cultural and artistic works, and facilitating the enhancement of their economic incomes, and Huaiyang's folk artists have seized the times and opportunities to create and disseminate their cultural knowledge, and not only bring the Ni-ni-gou to a better cultural and artistic form, but also to a better future, and to a better future. This not only brings this cultural art form to a better direction, but also makes the art of Ni-ni-gou go out of Huaiyang, out of Henan, and even out of the country, so that more countries and regions can understand the culture of the Chinese nation which has a long history. The current environment, the way of development and the people's demand will be fused, prompting the Ni-ni-gou to add new cultural connotations, permanent and continuous inheritance.

#### ① Ni-ni-gou and the Taihao Tomb

Taihao Mausoleum is the capital of Fuxi Clan in Chinese history. The "Taihao Fuxi Mausoleum", the first of the "Three Emperors and Five Emperors" and the "First of Hundred Kings", is located three miles north of Huaiyang City. After the establishment of China, Taihao Mausoleum was listed as a national key cultural relics protection unit and a national 4A-level tourist attraction. Every year in early spring, on the first and fifteenth day of each month of the lunar calendar, it is an important time for folk worship, and the incense is flourishing, and the annual "Human Ancestor Ceremony" has been selected as a national intangible cultural heritage.

At present, the temple of Taihao Fuxi Mausoleum in Huaiyang is the largest and the most well-preserved mausoleum. There is not only the mausoleum of Fuxi in

the Taihao Mausoleum, but also the temple built to worship him, which sits in the north and faces the south, covers an area of 875 acres, and is called "the first mausoleum in the world". There is no way to tell when the Tahao Mausoleum was built, and the existing inscription has only one sentence: "The mausoleum was very far away from here last year." The earliest record of the Tahoe Mausoleum is from Confucius' Family Tales: "Confucius was in Chen from Wei, and Chen Hou opened the stage of Ling Yang." This shows that there was already a Tahoe mausoleum before Confucius. According to "Chenzhou Prefectural Records": "Before the Han Dynasty, there was a shrine". According to Huaiyang County Records, "The mausoleum began in the Spring and Autumn Period". In short, the Tahoe Mausoleum is also full of unknown and mysterious colors, just like all the legends attached to it. Legend has it that in the early stage of the creation of Fuxi Mausoleum, the soil needed was brought to Huaiyang from all over the world a little bit by the incense burners, and then Fuxi Mausoleum was slowly constructed from this soil. On March 22, 2008, Taihao Mausoleum Temple Fair is known as "the first temple fair in the Central Plains". As shown in the picture.



Figure 20 Taihao Mausoleum, Huaiyang  
Source: Photo by the author himself

Legend has it that the Tahoe Mausoleum began as a small temple built in the Spring and Autumn Period by the sage Confucius to convince the king of Chen to build it, and the time point here matches with the record of Chenzhou Prefectural Records of the Qianlong Period, which is roughly the Spring and Autumn Period. At the same time, the official data of Junyang show that in history, Confucius did go to Junyang to give lectures, and the String Song Terrace in Huaiyang is built in honor of Confucius, and Huaiyang in the Spring and Autumn Period was indeed the state of Chen, so the legend and the record of the Chenzhou Prefecture Records are in line with the degree of conformity.

After the Han Dynasty, successive generations have paid some attention to the protection of the Tahoe Mausoleum, and in the fourth year of the Tang Dynasty, Li Shimin issued an edict prohibiting grazing around the mausoleum. In 954 A.D., Zhou



Shizong of the Fifth Dynasty ordered to prohibit the people from farming and making timber near the Taihao Mausoleum. Zhao Kuangyin, the founder of the Song Dynasty, set up the guardian of the mausoleum in the first year of the Jianlong era and issued an edict to offer sacrifices once every three years, using the specifications of the Taijiu prison and with sacrificial vessels. In 966 A.D., the imperial edict to set up a mausoleum temple, set up to guard the mausoleum household five, spring and fall with too much jail sacrifice. In 971 A.D., two more households were added, and Zhu Xiang and Wu Ying were used as the supporting rituals for Fuxi. From the continuous change and development of Taihao Mausoleum, we can see that all the emperors and kings worshiped Fuxi, but in the Yuan Dynasty, due to the decline of the status of Fuxi, the official and civil worship of Fuxi was slowly reduced, so that in the last years of the Yuan Dynasty, Taihao Mausoleum was already dilapidated, and it was not easy to find a place to worship Fuxi.

Thereafter, Zhu Yuanzhang in Hongwu four years to the quasi-Yang Tai Hao mausoleum to pay a visit to Fuxi, personally write a sacrifice to Fuxi Ming Tai Zu Zhu Yuanzhang on Tai Hao mausoleum can be described as a great credit, can be said that there is no Zhu Yuanzhang would not have the current Tai Hao mausoleum, the existing in the mausoleum in the Ming Dynasty inscriptions as well as Tai Hao mausoleum specifications of both the two and the legend of each other, which can be illustrated that the present day Tai Hao mausoleum is the period of the Ming Dynasty Zhu Yuanzhang construction.

According to historical records, the Ming Dynasty has been focusing on the repair of the Taihao Mausoleum, and every year will send officials to the Taihao Mausoleum to worship Fuxi, and now there is still the Taihao Mausoleum in the Ministry of Rites of the Ming Dynasty issued by the Taihao temple rituals. From the text we can see that the present day Taihao Mausoleum was built in the Ming Dynasty, and the emperor sent commissioners to Taihao Mausoleum to worship Fuxi in the spring and fall every year, which shows that the official worship of Taihao Mausoleum Temple was quite grand and important at that time.

The Qing Dynasty also inherited the tradition of the Ming Dynasty, focusing on the protection of the Taihao Mausoleum, and invested a lot of money in repairing the antlers in the 10th year of the Qing Qianlong Dynasty, which formed the present pattern of the Taihao Mausoleum. During the Republic of China period, there were official offerings. After the founding of new China, the state attaches great importance to the Tai Hao mausoleum, in order to strengthen the protection of the Tai Hao mausoleum, has set up the Hsi mausoleum custodian committee and build the Tai Hao mausoleum of cultural relics custodian, the Tai Hao mausoleum police station, etc., and in 1996 the Tai Hao mausoleum is recognized as a national key cultural relics protection units. Tai Hao mausoleum in the history of the fluctuation has been preserved to the present, which is inseparable from the development of the historical trend and the superstructure of the two.

As the center of promoting Fuxi culture, Taihao Tomb also has more diversified functions in modern times, many international scholars and missions will come to Taihao Tomb to feel the Fuxi culture, and every year there will be foreign friends come to Taihao Tomb to visit and learn, and Taihao Tomb also has the function of exchanging cultures and establishing friendship between countries. At present, Taihao mausoleum has become the study base of many primary and

secondary schools and universities, and every year, a large number of scholars, experts and students from art colleges in and out of the province come to Taihao mausoleum to study and pick up winds, observe the ancient architectural complex of Taihao mausoleum, and learn the knowledge of Fuxi's heavy culture.

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou and Huaiyang Taihao Mausoleum Temple are closely related cultural systems, which are rich in national aesthetic significance, and their various forms represent people's longing for a better life. The history of Ni-ni-gou can be traced back to the ancient legend, they originated from the desire for new life, and appeared in the ritual of Fuxi with a unique image, and kept developing and expanding. As a symbol of good luck in the culture of Taihao Tomb, the clay dogs of Huaiyang have been endowed with mysterious power. Later, it was used to pray for good luck. Ni-ni-gou is a traditional folklore of Huaiyang, which is famous for the name of "the first dog in the world" in Taihao Mausoleum. Whenever someone goes to Taihao Mausoleum to pray for peace, they will buy some Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou and give them to the passers-by as a gift on the way home to express their blessing with the passers-by's auspicious words. Legend has it that Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou can cure diseases when taken with water, so anyone who goes to the temple fair will buy it in order to get health and peace. If you give it to your friends and relatives, it can eliminate calamities and diseases. The colorful and simple clay dogs of Huaiyang have become a unique art carrier in the farming civilization, giving the spirit to the majority of the grassroots in terms of faith, feelings, and the ability to perceive beautiful things, and constantly infecting the local customs.

In Huaiyang, because of the Taihao Mausoleum, temple fairs gradually became formal and grand. Ni-ni-gou are closely related to these temple activities, and it is precisely because there is a natural market such as temple fairs that Ni-ni-gou have been passed down to the present day. In addition to the temple fair, like the Spring Festival, the first day of each month, these special festivals, people have been adhering to the ancestor worship behavior, but also on the heritage of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou has a certain role.

Taihao Fuxi established his capital city in Huaiyang. Subsequently, after his death, he was buried in Taihao Mausoleum in Huaiyang. According to the records, Tai Hao Mausoleum temple fair since ancient times, its origin can be traced back to about 6,000 years ago, the author consults the information also did not find the exact information to support. However, according to the information recorded, before the second day of the second month of the lunar calendar, a custom on the temple fair is a child to knock to the tile strike, and the child knocking the custom of the tile Yue produced in the country of Chen, and thus deduced that, possibly in the Han Dynasty before the activities of the sacrifice of Fuxi. During the Republic of China, Taihao Tomb Human Ancestor Temple Fair has been the largest and oldest temple fair in Henan Province, and the temple fair was unprecedented. During the Cultural Revolution, Huaiyang Taihao Tomb was also in the ranks of the Four Olds, the ancient temple fair was forced to stop. It was not until after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee that the ancient temple fair of Taihao Ling gained vitality and started to organize the annual temple fair again, and also resumed the material exchange. Nowadays, the ancient temple fair of Taihao Tomb can be regarded as a real large-scale ancient temple fair. Every year in February of the lunar calendar, the believers from Henan Province and the neighboring provinces and cities



rush to Taihao Tomb to pay homage to Fuxi and Nuwa, and express their reverence to the master of the human ancestor and the grandmother of the human ancestor in sincerity to pay homage to Fuxi of Taihao. It is commonly known as "February Festival" or "Ancestor of Man Temple Festival", which is now renamed as "Chinese Dragon Dynasty Temple Festival". Every year, the "Ancestor Temple Festival" attracts tourists from home and abroad, who gather here to pay homage to their ancestors, pray for their children, or sightseeing tours. Its long duration, the number of participants, the dissemination of a wide range of geographical areas, the impact of the momentum of the great, in all regions of China's folk temple fair is rare. The temple fair has all kinds of rituals of ancestor worship, child seeking, returning wishes, songs and dances to honor the gods and entertain themselves, as well as a variety of folk music and acrobatics, traditional crafts, snacks, department stores and Huaiyang's unique folk art Ni-ni-gou, a wide range, bustling with excitement. The men and women of faith either hold up the yellow silk and green dragon flag, or hold the "incense tower" in their hands, or carry the "flagpole", or carry the "flower basket" on their shoulders, twisting rice-planting songs, playing the waist drum, rowing the dry boat, and performing the dragon and lion dances, and the drums and gongs burst, and the firecrackers and firecrackers go off. Drums and gongs, firecrackers, cigarette smoke, people like a tide, the sound of the sky, the scene is very spectacular. All ancestor incense, we must bring a handful of soil from home, incense sprinkled on the tomb of Fuxi Mausoleum, known as "Tim Tomb". In order to let the human ancestor blessing clan incense continuously, family well-being, livestock and prosperity. Because the scale of the temple fair is very spectacular. In the temple fair, people will worship Fuxi and pray for their families and themselves.



Figure 21 Temple fair scene  
Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>

At that time, Ni-ni-gou will be sold at the temple fair, Ni-ni-gou are not just clay toys, but also has a rich connotation. Ni-ni-gou contain people's desire for a better life and are a kind of spiritual support.

Tai Hao Ling "human ancestor temple fair" as a unique regional cultural phenomenon in the Central Plains, is an inland China constantly in the spirit of the origin of mankind materialized into a concrete, civilization materialized into folklore phenomena of an extremely typical, rare geographic area of the cultural phenomenon. Here, the historical accumulation of civilization and the evolution and renewal of folklore constitute a humanistic picture full of mystery, joy and vitality.

Chinese New Year is also a good time to sell clay dogs. "The Spring Festival, also known as "New Year" or "Da Nian", originated in the Shang Dynasty as a time for people to pay homage to their gods and ancestors at the end of the year. During the Spring Festival, people return to their hometowns to be reunited with their loved ones, no matter where they are in the world. People choose to worship their ancestors and play during the Spring Festival. The Taihao Mausoleum and Chenchu Ancient Street, which are holy places for ancestor worship and play, are especially crowded every year. During this period, craftsmen will take out the clay dogs they made to buy and sell. In the local Huaiyang area, the clay dogs have the function of praying for good luck, and people often buy a few of them at this time to pray for peace and prosperity in the new year. In addition to the ancient temple fair in February and the Spring Festival, local people in Huaiyang come to Taihao Mausoleum on the first day



Figure 22 Stalls selling Ni-ni-gou at Chinese New Year

**Source: Photo by the author himself**

of every month to make sacrifices. They usually buy three sticks of incense. It is not that the more incense you have, the stronger your feelings are, but the incense you offer is enough to have your heart in it. As the first day of each month, there is no influence like the Spring Festival and the popularity of the February 2nd Temple Fair, most of them are local people in Huaiyang. The number of people will be much less than the number of February Temple Fair, but this does not mean that people will not come here to sell Ni-ni-gou, the first day of the year there will also be craftsmen to come to Tai Hao Mausoleum to sell Ni-ni-gou.

"Ni-ni-gou" as Huaiyang unique folk color sculpture, he and Tai Hao mausoleum is inseparable, "Chenzhou County Records" - Volume II - Folklore records: "February 2, dawn, with the ash circle ground granary shape to omen rich year, Er hit the tile percussion, the residents of Tai Hao mausoleum to incense Dien Surname." Therefore, during February 2 every year, people from all over the world come to the ancestor to offer incense, and Tai Hao Mausoleum also organizes ancestor worship activities. During the temple fair, local residents sell handmade Ni-ni-gou here. Local artists say Ni-ni-gou is sold in the Taihao Tomb, there is the Taihao Tomb on the Ni-ni-gou, modeling is left behind by the ancestors do not know how many years. The evolution and formation of "Ni-ni-gou" is inseparable from the Fuxi Mausoleum, whether it is traced back to the Fuxi's or its own history, as a special product of Huaiyang February 2 temple fair has become a symbol of ancestor worship, pray for blessings of life, is the accumulation of primitive ecological culture, is a symbol of local culture. Ni-ni-gou has a good meaning of avoiding trouble and seeking blessings, so the visitors in the temple pilgrimage after incense will buy Ni-ni-gou back to show good luck. Later, with the expansion of the scale of the temple, the local economy has been greatly developed, coupled with the influence of Fuxi culture, attracting more and more tourists, Ni-ni-gou in addition to as a sacrificial offerings and toys, it also has a collection of decorative and other roles, and from more aspects of the people to make people understand human ancestor temple and its customs and habits.

## ②Ni-ni-gou and the Culture of Faith

The shapes and motifs depicted on the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are associated with the need to honor ancestors, entertain the gods, and seek children. Its decorative patterns are in fact expressions of reproductive symbols, which are abstracted from reproductive organs. The expression of this kind of image is actually a reflection and embodiment of the content, and the inherent meaning of "Ni-ni-gou" is reproduction. The drawing of such decorative patterns also reflects the extremely strong expectation of the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" for the worship of reproduction. Each shape of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" has its corresponding myths and legends, Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is not only a kind of folk art and sacrificial offerings, it is also the manifestation of primitive totem viewpoints, is the inheritance of China's primitive art, which is a real record of the continuation of the Chinese civilization, but also a record of the history of the Chinese civilization. It is a record of the continuous growth of Chinese civilization, and has a very profound cultural meaning. Many images of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are simple, simple and pompous, which are beyond the objective objects in real life, and have the special charm of primitive totem art, which are the physical symbols of the ancestor complex and reproductive reverence of Chinese civilization, and are the fundamental embodiment of the strong will of the ancestors to control their own



destiny, which is the worship and remembrance of Fu Xi's ancestors. Fuxi's worship and remembrance. Therefore, the profound exploration, discovery and development of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" has a long-term practical significance to the aesthetic consciousness and inner culture.

#### (1) Totem Worship

Animals were an important carrier of totem beliefs in ancient times, and the reason why animals could become the most worshipped totems in early mankind is due to the characteristics of the environment and era in which they lived at that time. "Totem" is human in the uncivilized primitive society, in order to seek more spiritual support, they will have the deterrent power of the beast as the tribe's totem symbol, which reflects the primitive ancestors of the invisible power of worship.

Ni-ni-gou include a variety of bizarre animal forms, such as the dog with a human face, the nine heads, the straw-hatted tiger, the cat pulling the monkey, etc. From these images, it is not difficult to find out that in the beliefs of the ancient forefathers, the animal totem played a very important role. Dog totem is the carrier of early totem worship, and mud Ni-ni-gou is a specific form in the dog totem series. Legend has it that Fuxi used the dog as a totem, "Fuxi" word if decomposed, that is, "human" and "dog" word synthesis, which can also be understood as Fuxi is the human ancestor, the dog is Fuxi clan totem ". Looking at thousands of different shapes of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou", its shape is full of dreams, romantic, mysterious color of the ancient totem shape, a variety of abstract and complex shape and make people difficult to understand the dots and lines of symbols, as if again to the ancient period of the coexistence of animals and people.

Because of the ignorance and fear of wind, rain, thunder, electricity and other phenomena in nature, coupled with their own weakness and expectations for survival, they had to find a form of protection for themselves, strange birds and beasts in the view of the ancient people have a great power and deterrent, and it is right to take them as the soul to rely on the worship, and continue to make them continue to demonize, and from then on the totem with the magic of the fantastic was created! -- Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou". Most of the deities in the Classic of Mountains and Seas have a close relationship with animals, which fully proves that the ancient ancestors respected and revered the animals in nature.



Figure 23 Association of the Sermon on the Mount with Ni-ni-gou

Source: <https://image.baidu.com/>

## (2) Reproductive worship

In the ancient times of low productivity level, people are to maintain the primitive society and clan an important factor of production of early mankind's most fundamental concept of thought is to survive and reproduce, and have a strong worship and reverence for reproduction. The ancestors will be the result of this primitive thinking, through the mud Ni-ni-gou group performance, mud Ni-ni-gou abdomen painted similar to the genitals of the decorative symbols show a strong color of the cult of reproduction.

Many shapes of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" are similar to the appearance of genitals, and the decorative patterns depicted on the exterior of "Ni-ni-gou" are also generalized and deformed female genitalia shapes. The most representative of all the images is the "human face monkey", also called "human ancestor monkey", like a man and not a man, like a monkey and not a monkey, the human face monkey body, its belly before the five elements of color depiction of a large female yin shape, occupying all the abdomen, the shape of the serious, sacred. Through the female yin decorative pattern and other decorative patterns, we can realize the primitive society's respect for motherhood, and the reverence for genitals. There is another type of "pack-banhong" (as shown in the picture), which is also a typical shape of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou". On the back of the big Bambu Hong, there are ten or twelve small Bambu Hongs on its back, which embodies the civilization characteristics of the matriarchal clan society in the ancient times, and also reflects the ancestor's desire for many children and reverence for birth. Through the shape and decorative patterns of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou", we can clearly see that the worship of reproduction has always been an inevitable factor for its survival, inheritance and development.



*Figure 24 Pack Dock*

Source:<https://pic.sogou.com/d>



The famous French anthropologist and archaeologist André Leroy Gouin's theory of sex symbols states that "female symbols include rectangles, triangles, circles, etc., and male symbols include dots, lines and feather-shaped symbols, etc., which are mostly derived from generalizations and deformations of male and female reproductive organs". The peculiar image categories, mysterious and abstract decorative patterns, and solemn and dignified creative materials of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" all show the core viewpoint of reproductive reverence, and completely record the change and growth of human civilization of reproductive worship, reflecting the mutual connection between traditional folk art and primitive art.

### (3) Ancestor worship

Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is also known as "mausoleum dog" or "spirit dog", according to legend, Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is a dog raised by human ancestors to guard the mausoleum. It is said that Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is the dog raised by human ancestor, and it is the dog that guards the mausoleum for human ancestor. According to historical records and folk myths, Taihao Fuxi's in China's ancient times is a wise emperor, is the first generation of the Chinese nation's dragon ancestor, for the first of a hundred kings, the first of the three emperors. At that time, it was thought that the dog was a protective god sent from heaven to the world to save all things, and many clans and groups used the dog as their totem. In the Book of Searching for Gods, it is recorded that in the ancient times of the Gaoxin Clan, there was a dog called "Pan Flesh", which liked five-colored clothes and was the ancestor of the barbarians. There are also such legends in the Huaiyang area in the east of Henan Province. The word "Fu" in Fuxi is composed of two parts: "man" and "dog", so it can be guessed that the dog was also a symbol of the Fuxi clan. Therefore, Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" appeared, should be and then the actual life of a thousand strands of contacts monkey is Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" all the images, the only embodiment of the human image, the main play has Fuxi's, female snail clan, holding a peach monkey, two-headed man, mother and child monkey, red-faced monkey, white-faced monkey belly monkey Monkeys, white-faced monkeys, toad monkeys, foot-carrying monkeys and other categories. The image of man and monkey in Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou", there is not too much distinction between man and monkey in the clay sculpture, that is, there are people in the physical form of the monkey features, the image of man and monkey features are present. This is because in the traditional folk culture of Huaiyang, there is no ape modeling, so the monkey modeling can be regarded as people's understanding and depiction of the ancestor's modeling, but also can be regarded as the memorial and remembrance of human ancestors. Among the many images of "Ni-ni-gou" in Huaiyang, the most peculiar one is "Chaos" (as shown in the picture).



Figure 25 **Hundun**  
Source: <https://pic.sogou.com/d>

"Chaos" is also called "Eight Elephants", which is similar to human beings and birds, as well as divine beasts and tortoises, and is generally considered to be mysterious and unique, possessing a strong totemistic understanding, and his image expresses the idea that the world is in a chaotic condition when the world does not exist, and that the world is in a state of unity between heaven and earth, which is an exemplary expression of reverence for the ancestors. His image expresses a time when the world did not exist, when the world was in a chaotic situation where heaven and earth were one, and it is an exemplary manifestation of reverence for the ancestors. For thousands of years, the children of China believe that Fu Xi Zun is the originator of the Chinese nation, but also the guardian of the world's living beings. Every year in the temple fair, people can still see the "TAN Jing pick" a kind of witch dance, but also "tie the doll", "Shougong" and other projects, such projects and the "mud Ni-ni-gou". Together with the "Ni-ni-gou", these programs show people's sentiment of singing praises to their ancestor Fuxi and their immense respect for him.

#### (4) Marriage customs

According to the "historical review of the three kings and five emperors," recorded "the ancient men and women are not different, the emperor began to system of marriage, to the Li Pi as a gift, the right name, through the media. In order to emphasize the basis of human relationships, and the people began not to read." Fuxi, female snail is the first pair of partners in the history of mankind, they stipulated the "monogamous" marriage system, promote the Chinese nation out of ignorance, but also the history of human marriage is of historical significance of the great progress. Huaiyang folk still tells a myth story that has been passed down for thousands of years: in ancient times, a huge natural disaster broke out, and the flood made mankind almost perish, but only Fu Xi, female woe of the two siblings, hiding in the belly of a huge white turtle, to avoid a catastrophe. When the flood waters receded, under the guidance of the white turtle, the two siblings, who were the only ones left in the

world, married in order to allow human beings to reproduce without any regard for the ethics between siblings. According to the Tang Dynasty's Li Shi Shi's *Dui Yi Zhi*, "But when the universe first began, there were only two siblings, Fuxi and Nuwa, in the Kunlun Mountains, and there were no other people in the antennae at that time, so after much discussion, they got married, and felt very humiliated. So the knot grass to make a fan to cover each other's faces, and now people get married when holding a fan also reflects the circulation of this matter." Nowadays, the image of "tiger with straw hat" in Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" comes from this story, and it is also the origin of women's head covering when they get married nowadays.

The reason why the shape of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is so rich in flavor is that its shape is responsible for the content and created by folk artists. The image of "Ni-ni-gou" and the meaning of the expression are very well integrated, containing its original strange folk story, but also filled with strong contemporary colors. Its original creative ability is something that we, who are engaged in art work nowadays, should vigorously learn from. Drawing on the composition of traditional folk art styles can open up their own creative themes and improve the development of artists' own traditional fine culture. Not only the artistic form of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" needs to be explored, but all the traditional folk art of our country is suitable for people to learn from the perspective of development and innovation. This will not only raise the level of civilization of modern people, but also borrow its image characteristics into their own creations.

With the development of society, people's concept of life changes, Ni-ni-gou on the folk beliefs and mystical religious colors are gradually hidden. And its cultural, entertainment, ornamental become the main function of today's temple fair in the Ni-ni-gou was submerged in all kinds of commodities, people gradually on it cold and distant. Ni-ni-gou is also affected by the market environment has changed, the traditional function of the changes in line with the development of traditional folk art needs, "Ni-ni-gou" as a special form of traditional culture and art, science and technology rapid development now, slowly faded out of our vision. The development of "mud Ni-ni-gou" is limited by the influence of multiple contradictions in today's society, and only when each part finds the right balance, mud Ni-ni-gou can get long-term and healthy development.

### ③ The emotional symbolism of the Ni-ni-gou

#### (1) Seeking and protecting children

Ni-ni-gou are folk clay toys sold at the temple fair of Taihao Mausoleum as a good-luck object, unique to Taihao Mausoleum in Huaiyang, and the difference between Ni-ni-gou and ordinary toys is that it has more cultural connotations and the function of seeking children. In the temple fair, selling Ni-ni-gou stalls can be seen everywhere, because of its small and portable and low price, go to incense pilgrimage after the incense visitors will buy some Ni-ni-gou, go home to the family's elders to let them play, in order to get the blessing of the human ancestor, so that their children are not infested with evil spirits. At this time, the Ni-ni-gou represent their good wishes for their children's happiness and peace, good luck, and the elimination of disasters and difficulties. Folk activities related to Ni-ni-gou are also aimed at praying for blessings and seeking children, such as the rituals of "carrying the scriptures", "the kiln for children and grandchildren" and "tying up dolls". "The primitive witch dance is a continuation of the Chu culture, which symbolizes the process of intercourse

between Fuxi and Nuwa with the black veil behind the dancers wrapped around like a tail; and the "Zisunyao" is a ritual of the Taihao Mausoleum's "Hsienren Hall". The "Zisunyao" is a hole in the shape of a round hole that appears on the cornerstone in the northeast corner of the Taihao Mausoleum's "Hsienren Temple", and female visitors will touch the Zisunyao with their hands for good luck, which is considered to be the same as the ancestor of the human being, and is believed to possess the ability to give life force to the human being, and those who touch the Zisunyao will be able to receive shelter; the "tethered dolls" are made of clay that visitors buy in the temple fairs. Purchase the same dolls made of mud toys, and then in the children tied to a red floss, this behavior is also one of the rituals of the people seeking children to protect their children. These folk activities related to Ni-ni-gou have been handed down to the people to send the good wishes of children and grandchildren, healthy children and grandchildren.

### (2) Praying for Blessings and Good Luck

Praying for luck and good fortune has been a common and constant psychological need of Chinese people for thousands of years. The culture of good luck has penetrated into every aspect of people's lives. Ni-ni-gou artists with hints and symbols in the Ni-ni-gou body cleverly embedded in the psychological desire to symbolize good luck, wealth and peace. Small mud turtle, yin and yang beast, eight trigrams turtle, monkey holding a peach and so on Ni-ni-gou modeling are expressed in the psychological appeal of people praying for good luck. A lot of temple visitors, will buy some to take back to expect the family peace and happiness. On the way home if you meet the children on the road shouting "old Zhai Gong, walk slowly, give me a handful of mud Ni-ni-gou, you can live ninety-nine years old." For good luck, the handful of scattered, let the children scramble. Ni-ni-gou is guarded in the Fu Xi side of the dog, in people's hearts, Ni-ni-gou can eliminate difficulties, drive away evil spirits, to protect the peace. And people believe that the dog is a loyal and reliable partner of human beings, and it has the image of the guardian who protects the home. In addition, many of the Ni-ni-gou modeling, are full of people's beautiful imagination. For example, the lion, dragon and phoenix, fortune, phoenix, peacock screen and other themes of modeling images are embedded in the people for the life of the aesthetic interest and values of life, good luck.

### (3) Harvest Expectations

It is recorded in the Records of Huaiyang County that: "The Yellow River and Huaihe River have been flooded many times, with constant waterlogging, frequent early disasters, locust plagues and hailstorms". Huaiyang has been plagued by natural disasters since ancient times, coupled with Huaiyang is located in the plains is the birthplace of China's agricultural civilization, generations of Huaiyang people on the agricultural harvest of the expectations of the more ardent, and this harvest expectations of the feelings of nature is also engraved in the hearts of the Ni-ni-gou artists and through the Ni-ni-gou to show that the Ni-ni-gou has also been shaped into a shelter for a good harvest of the spirit of the spirit of agriculture. In the Ni-ni-gou artists circulated this sentence: "a ton of Ni-ni-gou is a ton of grain" in the past, they believe that the Ni-ni-gou can be exchanged for food, and this concept is also the artists from generation to generation to make Ni-ni-gou power. Therefore, the Ni-ni-gou in front of Huaiyang Mud Sculpture Museum and Yuhuang Guan in Taiwu Mausoleum are carrying baskets of corn and fruits after harvest, which is the most

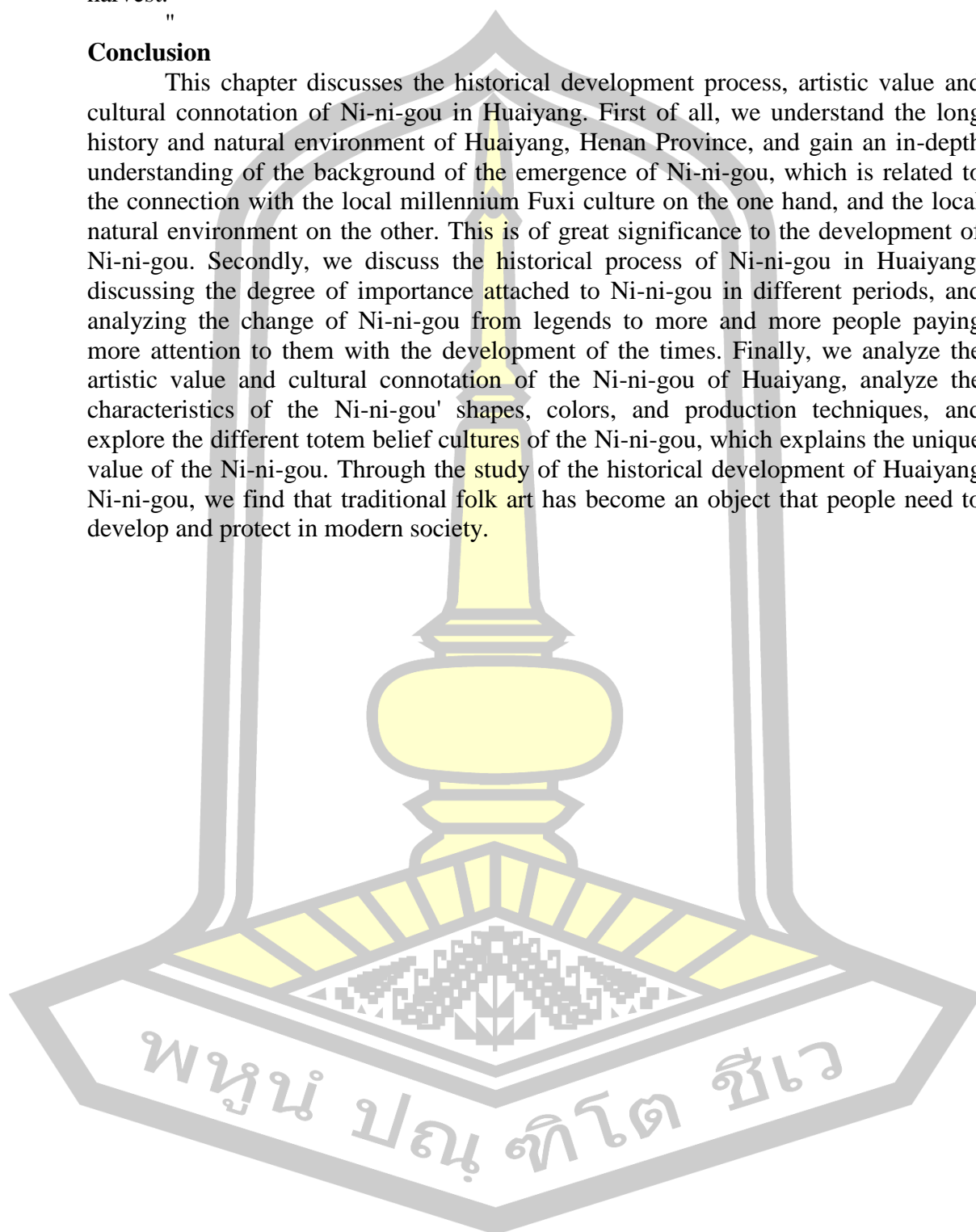


direct manifestation of the cultural implication of the Ni-ni-gou' expectation of a good harvest.

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### Conclusion

This chapter discusses the historical development process, artistic value and cultural connotation of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang. First of all, we understand the long history and natural environment of Huaiyang, Henan Province, and gain an in-depth understanding of the background of the emergence of Ni-ni-gou, which is related to the connection with the local millennium Fuxi culture on the one hand, and the local natural environment on the other. This is of great significance to the development of Ni-ni-gou. Secondly, we discuss the historical process of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, discussing the degree of importance attached to Ni-ni-gou in different periods, and analyzing the change of Ni-ni-gou from legends to more and more people paying more attention to them with the development of the times. Finally, we analyze the artistic value and cultural connotation of the Ni-ni-gou of Huaiyang, analyze the characteristics of the Ni-ni-gou' shapes, colors, and production techniques, and explore the different totem belief cultures of the Ni-ni-gou, which explains the unique value of the Ni-ni-gou. Through the study of the historical development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, we find that traditional folk art has become an object that people need to develop and protect in modern society.





## CHAPTER III

### Ni-ni-gou Invented in a Double Dimension

#### Introduction

This chapter analyzes the invention of Huaiyang clay dogs from the dimensions of artwork and social process. Artwork is the characteristics of Huaiyang mud Ni-ni-gou as folk mud sculpture itself, mainly on its artistic characteristics of the study, to explore in the artwork perspective mud Ni-ni-gou shape, color, pattern, material changes. With the change of the times, the change of the social process affects the change of the Ni-ni-gou, mainly manifested in the positioning of different, the value of the Ni-ni-gou changes, functional changes, etc., so the two are based on each other, the social process to promote the transformation of the work of art, and the transformation of the work of art to promote the development of the social process. Therefore, this chapter is aimed at the study of the dual dimensions of Ni-ni-gou artwork and social process.

#### **3.1: The Changes of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in the Dimension of "Artworks"**

##### **3.1.1 Changes in modeling subject matter**

The shape of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is created by folk artists with their own imagination or images from myths and legends, the shape is exaggerated and strange, rich in changes, with unique totem modeling features, showing the ancient period of people's worship of reproduction, and sending the ancient people hope that the family's desire for prosperity.

In the past, most of the clay dogs were mainly in traditional shapes, such as cat pulling monkeys, human ancestor monkeys, straw hat tigers and other traditional shapes, some of which were exquisite and delicate, some of which were rough and generalized, and the shapes were varied and vivid. These traditional shapes are closely related to various myths and legends in Huaiyang, and they are all figurative products created by local folk artists in Huaiyang, each of which contains the extraordinary imagination and creativity of ancient folk artists.

The modern clay dog is a more secularized type that is more in line with the aesthetics as well as the good wishes of the modern public. It is characterized by folk artists choosing materials from real life and getting inspiration for their creations from life experiences. However, its modeling techniques and inherent charm have not diminished. It is worth noting that this type of clay dog clearly reveals the "individual" character of the folk artist. Whether it is the way of modeling or the form, the traditional Ni-ni-gou are losing the worship of ancestors and gods under a specific concept. Modeling may be the Ni-ni-gou sacred and secular nature of the most intense game, the old artists are adhering to a thousand years of dogma: "the old mold can not be changed, changed is not a human ancestor's dog." Today, when faced with the severe test of the market, artists have to clay dog traditional modeling innovation. The old artist told the author: "I used to say this sentence, but now do not say, for fear that some people do not accept." As the old artist said, many Ni-ni-gou artists have incorporated many cultural elements of modern society in molding Ni-ni-gou. Many of the Ni-ni-gou modeling is never before, the old artist said: "eighties before the Ni-

ni-ni-gou have not changed, are small swallows, small mud turtle and so on from the eighties to the ninety-four years has not changed much. At that time, the biggest is the old turtledove. In 1994, Huaiyang sent representatives to Beijing to exhibit, an expert asked why there was no Chinese zodiac, then later, the twelve Chinese zodiac signs. Snake and rabbit before there is no from 1994 onwards." Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in recent years modeling changes more rapidly, adding a lot of fashion elements. For example, there are Ni-ni-gou with "good luck" and "treasure" written on them.

In order to adapt to the psychology of modern people's consumption, today's Ni-ni-gou are getting bigger and bigger. In the past, the Ni-ni-gou is a small shape, there is no shape larger Ni-ni-gou. But the shape of the smaller Ni-ni-gou is not prominent, outside the people can not see, send people also can not take the hand. The local old man told the author: "the past this mud Ni-ni-gou biggest, only a tiger's mouth (about 15 cm) now how big are, one meter five are, the bigger the more expensive. I do not favor the Ni-ni-gou made into a large, but can not ah, small does not make money." For example, there are large clay dogs on display in the Tahao Tombs.



Figure 26 **Large Ni-ni-gou**  
Source: Photo by the author himself

Whether it is fashionable shape or to big for the beauty of the Ni-ni-gou, are to cater to the modern aesthetic and the formation of changes, in a sense this shape of diverse, peculiar shape of the Ni-ni-gou, although the increase in categories but the body has been diluted in the Ni-ni-gou as a divine unique primitive, mysterious, simple meaning, and more commercialization and some of the idea of quick success and quick gain, for this change, produced a variety of discussions For this change, a variety of discussions have arisen. Some people think that innovation helps the development of traditional art, while some think that the change of shape will affect the weakening of the traditional concept of reverence for the gods and the loss of the traditional cultural symbolism. What kind of change can be adopted to retain the moral meaning of traditional modeling and at the same time cater to the aesthetic needs of people nowadays, thus contributing to the development of traditional art.

### 3.1.2 Evolution of color connotations

The colors of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou are the most basic of the five elements of folk colors, with black as the base color and green, red, yellow and white as the decorations, with bold lines and strong but harmonious color contrasts, fully reflecting the "five-color concept" of the ancient Chinese tradition. The five-color concept is an aesthetic concept that allows individuals to sublimate natural colors into philosophical and ideal colors. In ancient Chinese aesthetic thought, the five colors have a metaphysical expression and play a crucial role in the interaction between heaven and man, thus obtaining auspicious symbolism. As a result, the color aesthetic structure of the five-color view is dominant in the folk art genre, using a variety of combinations to create a unique effect that is strong, warm, heavy, and beautiful.



Figure 27 Pentachrome Chart  
Source: [www.baidu.com/p](http://www.baidu.com/p)

The traditional Ni-ni-gou has black as its base color, and white, red, yellow and green are used to draw patterns with specific connotations and forms on the body of the black Ni-ni-gou with red, yellow, green and white. The color aesthetic characteristics of Ni-ni-gou are suitable for the folk customs of coloring tradition, which expresses people's love and yearning for a better life in the future, and the five colors of Ni-ni-gou have high artistic research value, reflecting the unique folk aesthetics from another point of view. The traditional five-color painting method of Ni-ni-gou has been continued until now, but with the development of Ni-ni-gou art inheritance, some inheritors have added more colors when creating Ni-ni-gou to meet people's diversified color needs, and some inheritors have abided by the "traditional five-color view", and created new subjects on the basis of the tradition, which has also had a different effect on the color of Ni-ni-gou. The color of Ni-ni-gou also has another saying, it is said that in the old society technology is relatively backward, artists can get what color pigment, with what color pigment for painting, so the color of Ni-ni-gou is relatively single, stable.

Modern Ni-ni-gou in the "visual economy" "eyeball effect" led by the Ni-ni-gou in the workmanship and color is increasingly sophisticated, color and ornamentation is to get rid of the ancient, simple tradition, its bright colors, elaborate ornamentation. Modern Ni-ni-gou are increasingly rich in color and decoration, such as characters, modern patterns, RMB symbols are painted on its body, giving a strong visual impact. As a result, the local flavor contained in the Ni-ni-gou is also being obscured by the splendid colors and decorations of modern times. The old artist said: "Nowadays, who will buy that strange-looking, people do not understand what it means to come to the tourists are not all trying to have fun, so they like. Nowadays, young people always feel that the old look too earthy, look at the eyes, outside when tourists are not too much like the old look, so buyers less." With the transformation of the world view, the traditional five-color has been unable to meet the needs of modern people, so the color has a new change, adding a variety of colors into, no longer only in the past five-color, in color more in line with the aesthetic needs of contemporary people.

### **3.1.3 Diversity of totemic patterns**

The pattern of Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" is a kind of figurative symbol from the appearance, and this kind of symbol originated from the matrilineal society in the Paleolithic Age, so that their imitation of the visible things has not yet entered the stage of creation, and with the development of the social productivity of this kind of symbols gradually transformed into the stage of decoration. The creation and continuation of the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is entirely the legacy of the ancient totem worship of human ancestors. In addition, the existence of "Ni-ni-gou" is closely related to Fuxi culture, Ni Baocheng in "Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou" will be divided into: female yin pattern, sun pattern, flower and grass pattern, horseshoe pattern, rope-like pattern, triangular pattern and so on.

With the development of society, the traditional patterns have changed. In the past, most of the Ni-ni-gou were represented by traditional patterns, which retained the original meaning of the reproduction worship consciousness of offspring reproduction and human prosperity in a specific artistic language. The French anthropologist and archaeologist André Leroy Gouin's theory of sexual symbolism



holds that circles, triangles, and rectangles are female symbols, while dots, lines, and feathered symbols are male symbols, and that these symbols are abstract expressions of male and female reproductive organs, respectively. Early humans believed that the conception of new life was accomplished by women, and that women were rightfully revered. As a result, the female genitalia, which plays a key role in the process of childbearing, was rightly worshipped. Ni-ni-gou, which are used for ancestor worship and praying for children, have many abstract symbols on their bodies and the patterns they are composed of, which express the strong concept and awareness of female fertility worship. The traditional Ni-ni-gou highlights the mysterious and abstract symbols showing the primitive beauty of the totem culture.

Modern Ni-ni-gou in order to cater to the public's favorite, the spirit of the sacred in the gradual dissolution, in addition to the expression of reverence for reproduction, will also be more direct prayers for the realization of the aspirations of the ideal, such as Ni-ni-gou will be directly written on the body to express the wishes of the auspicious words, such as "immediately feudal lords", "the golden list" or other symbols with good intentions. ", "prosperity" or other symbols with good wishes. Secondly, the pattern is more refined and crafted, and we find that there is a great difference in the Ni-ni-gou pattern. Now the mud Ni-ni-gou pattern decorated with very neat, delicate, gorgeous, colorful and rich. The previous Ni-ni-gou is slightly rough compared to the decoration of the pattern, and the workmanship is not fine. Although the exquisite Ni-ni-gou is easier for modern people to like and accept. But after the exquisite decoration is missing the original mystery of the Ni-ni-gou, the meaning of simplicity.



*Figure 28 Immediately Ensigning a Marquis*  
Source: <https://image.so.com>

### 3.1.4 Production process improvements

Ni-ni-gou production of its materials must also come from the local, due to the special characteristics of the Yellow River region, the main material is yellow rubber mud kneading. Whether it is material or raw material, mainly because of the climate, most of the "Ni-ni-gou" are made in the spring and fall, the weather in the north is too dry in summer, easy to crack, and winter in the north is dry and cold, the raw material is easy to freeze the yellow rubber mud is difficult to pinch and dry. Moreover, most of the "Ni-ni-gou" are handmade, limited production, the villagers are in the agricultural leisure time production, so most of the production time is a year. The process is roughly divided into: digging, mixing, beating, kneading, coloring and painting. Because the Ni-ni-gou uses mud in its material, it has a lot of defects, so it is in a very unfavorable position in today's market. First of all, the Ni-ni-gou made of mud is very heavy, not easy to come to the incense burning tourists to carry, especially from far away to come to worship human ancestors. Ni-ni-gou in the carry is very easy to touch rotten or knock off the color. Secondly, the preservation time of mud is not long. In the online sales also can not, are mud, too heavy, logistics costs are too high, the transportation is also easy to touch the rotten, broken, so it is very inconvenient and sales.

In order to facilitate the sale of Ni-ni-gou in the future sales to overcome these shortcomings, the local artists to make Ni-ni-gou into ceramic, the mold does not change, or black background, ceramic hollow in the middle, not fragile, light weight, long preservation time. Representative of the young artist Shao Bo, the traditional clay Ni-ni-gou made of ceramic products, ceramic plates. The final use of traditional clay, the material has not changed and does not affect the expression of the traditional meaning, the use of ceramics has the advantage of easy to preserve.



Figure 29 News Coverage of Changes in Ni-ni-gou Clay Sculptures to Ceramics

Source: <https://image.so.com>

With the continuous development of social science and technology, the modern clay dog in addition to ceramic clay dog, with more and more diversified materials such as: needlework embroidery clay dog, paper-cutting clay dog, cloth clay dog, modern composite materials to do the sculpture of the clay dog and so on. At the same time, the pigment of the Ni-ni-gou has also changed a lot. In the past, the color of the Ni-ni-gou was basically made by the artists themselves according to the inherited craft. This kind of self-made pigment in the practice of slightly cumbersome and in the process of coloring will be affected by the season and the climate, winter coloring because of the lower temperature pigment is easy to freeze in the need to add warmth to be able to use. In summer, the odor of the pigment is unpleasant in hot weather. Compared with traditional vegetable pigment and advertising color, advertising color is stable, diversified and small in cost. The wide use of advertising color greatly improves the production process of Ni-ni-gou and its own economic benefits.

The changes in the dimension of "artwork" of Huaiyang clay dogs are influenced by the cultural concepts and traditional customs formed by the local people in their daily practice, and its artistic characteristics, as an expression of the local folk cultural concepts, reflect the choices made by the artists in the face of traditional aesthetic ideals in their aesthetic creation activities and the innovative interpretations made by individuals on the basis of the traditional aesthetic ideals. Its artistic characteristics, as an expression of local folk culture concepts, reflect the choices made by artists in the face of traditional aesthetic ideals in their aesthetic creation activities and the innovative interpretations made by individuals on the basis of traditional aesthetic ideals. The variation of the artistic shape of the Ni-ni-gou is also the result of the Huaiyang people's efforts to adapt to the ever-changing development of society and commercial needs.

### **3.2 Changes in Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in the Dimension of "Social Process"**

#### **3.2.1 Dilution of the function of cultural beliefs**

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou are dependent on the existence of the local temple fair, which is a collective form of communication covering the dialog between people and gods, nature, ancestors and others. This kind of communication is not only words, but also creates a special atmosphere through a series of activities to realize people's inner communication. Temple fairs reflect the diversity of people's lives and the breadth of their aspirations, and even trivial family matters can find an outlet for confession in temple fairs. Ni-ni-gou are regarded as "holy objects" because of their close connection with temple fairs. Folk art is an expression of people's beliefs and ideals. It is closely connected to people's lives and has evolved with the development of material life. Nowadays, although temple fairs continue to flourish, people's reverence for the ancestors is not as deep as it used to be. The older generation still holds on to their faith in the ancestors, believing that worshipping them brings good luck. However, the attitude of the younger generation has gradually faded, and they consider the ancestor to be a symbol or a projection of the heart of the person who prays to him or her. They place more importance on gaining inner satisfaction and confidence by expressing their wishes to their ancestors, and are less concerned with



whether or not the outcome is as desired. This change in mentality reflects a renewed awareness of faith and tradition in modern society.

In today's scientific and information age, most people still believe that Ni-ni-gou have the function of praying for blessings and peace, and still have far-reaching influence, but in their hearts, they also believe that it is only a kind of psychological comfort. The traditional status of Ni-ni-gou is getting lower and lower, and the sacred function and significance of the past are being diluted step by step. The author in the visit to face a different crowd, randomly interviewed to the temple pilgrimage to worship the incense, most of them know that the Ni-ni-gou is the temple in the characteristics, but few people have gone to buy. Many people think that the Ni-ni-gou is made of mud is not hygienic, like Ni-ni-gou can be used to "cure" function, in their view is even more ridiculous. Young people said they would not go to buy Ni-ni-gou, because they think it is not good-looking, too strange. But most of the purchase is foreign visitors, usually bought for the children, given to relatives and friends or their own souvenirs. Ni-ni-gou in the eyes of modern people only as a small souvenir to visit the temple to buy, the ancient function of exorcism is handed down to them is a joke.

In the temple fair, as the guardian dog of the human ancestor Fuxi, Ni-ni-gou is getting more and more neglected. From people's attitudes, we can also feel that the shelter and power of God have become less important in people's daily life. According to the memories of local elders, there used to be Ni-ni-gou for sale everywhere in Taihao Tomb, but nowadays there are only a few Ni-ni-gou for sale in the temple fair. With the development of society, folk culture and beliefs in people's lives are changing, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou from the Tai Hao Mausoleum in the "sacred", gradually fell into the folk ordinary handmade clay products. The important reason is that people's beliefs are gradually disappearing and fading.

### **3.2.2 Marketing is no longer homogenous**

With the development of the productive forces of society, the economy determines the superstructure. Engels said: "The development of politics, law, religion, philosophy, literature, art, etc. is based on economic development. However, they influence each other and have an effect on the economic base." Mr. Cen Jiawu also believes that "art is a product of a certain social and economic basis, and the special form it takes is inevitably determined by the pieces of production." Many phenomena in the history of art development, if not from the economic base related to the examination, said it is difficult to give a reasonable explanation. With the professionalization and commercialization of the production of clay dogs in Huaiyang, its connection with the economic aspect became direct and close. Ni-ni-gou marketing has changed, in the past, Ni-ni-gou traditional selling method fixed point, timing, selling place is in the Tai Hao mausoleum, time is the lunar calendar in February, Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou artists say: "March Ni-ni-gou, February sale.". The Ni-ni-gou is sold in February. Ni-ni-gou in the past is a long time in Huaiyang this even place, selling time only in the temple fair in February of the lunar calendar. Now the sale of Ni-ni-gou is all year round, and you can buy them at any time at the Ni-ni-gou sales stall in front of Tai Hao Mausoleum. Ni-ni-gou sales method also breaks through the traditional street sales, now Ni-ni-gou has been carried out online sales, in the Taobao online store, you can freely browse and buy your favorite style of Ni-ni-gou. Older artists say that modern high-tech, information technology, Ni-ni-gou can not be



"frog in the bottom of the well," once fluffy over the downtown Ni-ni-gou, now not only pay attention to the packaging of the magnificent and grand, but also pay attention to the modern way of sales, is not confined to a fixed location, but a variety of channels for sales.

### 3.2.3 The gradual disappearance of the living environment

Under the influence of the modern market economy, people's values and career choices have changed dramatically. The younger generation is gradually shifting their choice of working environment to the city, while the older generation of craftsmen is gradually declining with age, and there is a serious "gap" in the inheritance of traditional craftsmen, which is facing the crisis of the chain of inheritance being broken and there being no one to follow in their footsteps.



Figure 30 Transmission of skills by heirs

Source: <https://image.so.com>

The emergence of a fault line among the inheritors is mainly affected by three aspects. First, it is driven by material interests. Due to the rising prices of all kinds of goods, in order to make their own can have a better material life, people in the choice of work is more inclined to the higher salary of the occupation. However, the Ni-ni-gou industry, due to factors such as long learning cycle and inefficiency, the Ni-ni-gou carried out to generate the income received, mostly unable to meet the daily material needs. Second, the driving force behind career choice. With the continuous subdivision of occupation types, the circle of people's choice of occupation is also expanding bit by bit, and under the influence of the prestige view of occupation, people are more inclined to choose jobs with higher income and social status. Although traditional handicrafts bring a certain sense of honor and pride to the relevant practitioners, from the viewpoint of career, the work of traditional handicrafts is not an excellent choice for people to pursue. Thirdly, the share of market share is gradually decreasing. This has led to a gradual decline in the enthusiasm of those who

dedicate themselves to these jobs, and fewer and fewer people are engaged in the relevant work.

In today's society, there will be no market without demand, and traditional handicrafts in today's era of mud Ni-ni-gou handicraft art of inheritance and innovation of the contradiction between the protection of traditional skills and the development of cultural industries. The cultural memory as well as the cultural inheritance of the rural traditional handicrafts passed down by itself is realized through the oral teaching of the people of specific ethnic groups in life. In the process of inheritance, people are the key existence. Traditional handicrafts have changed through the continuous development and evolution of history as well as the constant changes in people's lifestyles. Since the 1980s, traditional agricultural culture has entered a period of cultural mutation, and the cultural environment of most traditional handicrafts has begun to change, including the following: cultural environment, social environment and ecological environment.

In 2013, Prof. Pan Lusheng pointed out in two sessions: "The rich resources of folk art cannot be effectively transformed, the phenomenon of substitute labor for handicrafts is more common in rural areas, and the self-interest of farmers who carry out the production of handicrafts is not effectively protected. In the process of production and marketing, intellectual property rights are lost, alienated or even disappeared. At the same time, folk art and folk art program activities are unable to effectively pass on the cultural heritage". He also pointed out that "the indigenous people from traditional villages and their ancestors are the creators and transmitters of culture, enriching and perfecting the cultural forms of their villages. However, in the past 30 years, the rapid rise of modernization and the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization in China, the huge urban-rural gap has put great pressure on the new generation of farmers. Under the pressure of survival, they have gradually lost confidence in their local traditional and inherent culture. Some fled the countryside to make a living, while others stayed in their places of origin but lost the motivation to further create and build local villages and pass on their culture. As a result, traditional villages and their cultures are gradually shrinking."

Nowadays, the development of commodity economy as well as tourism economy has had a great impact on people's daily life style, and people's mindset has also changed, and the concept of cultural heritage is gradually disappearing. Take the Ni-ni-gou as an example, the handmade form and skills are completely inherited and continued from generation to generation by the oral and heartfelt teaching among the clansmen, showing strong local folklore characteristics. In order to meet the market, the phenomenon of losing the traditional artistic style and connotation has appeared, and it is difficult to recognize the embarrassing situation. Ni-ni-gou products excessive modernization, lost the traditional characteristics. First, can not blow, is no longer a toy, and become a display, decoration, collection of clay artifacts; second is made with molds, mass production, thousands of the same product; third is coloring bright and colorful, losing the traditional artistic characteristics. All of the above reasons, exacerbated by the disappearance of the survival of mud Ni-ni-gou environment.

### 3.2.4 Changes in the mode of communication

Ni-ni-gou go hand in hand with the New Year's temple fair, inheriting the ancient culture and folklore activities of the Central Plains. As a traditional handicraft that exists in a family workshop, in the long history, the inheritance and production of Ni-ni-gou is mainly in the form of family, and the inheritance is passed from master to apprentice, from father to son, and from mother to daughter, which is the main form of traditional inheritance of Ni-ni-gou. This form of inheritance is, on the one hand, to ensure that the craft skills and modeling can always remain stable; on the other hand, the offspring of the family gradually shapes the skills of the Ni-ni-gou craft practice in the process of learning by ear. With the changes in the socio-economic environment, the inheritance of the art of Ni-ni-gou has gradually changed from a single mode of family inheritance to a comprehensive and diversified mode of inheritance combining master-apprentice inheritance and social inheritance. Although the traditional way of teaching each other can better ensure the accuracy of the skills or crafts of Ni-ni-gou, this traditional inheritance concept is difficult to adapt to the current information age of all-round dissemination.

At present, there are three main forms of dissemination of Ni-ni-gou: (1) exhibitions, awards and lectures. As a traditional handicraft, Ni-ni-gou are used by local craftsmen to participate in non-genetic inheritance skill competitions, and obtaining awards in the competitions enhances the popularity of Ni-ni-gou and makes them known to more people, and some inheritors bring Ni-ni-gou making skills into primary and middle school classrooms and give lectures to children, so as to let more children know about China's traditional culture;



Figure 31 Afro-Chinese Cultural Heritage in SchoolsSource  
Source:<https://image.so.com>



(2) media promotion and book publication. Ni-ni-gou were introduced to the public by media, magazines, TV and other channels, the earliest was in October 1987, the People's Daily and its overseas edition, published a special page on Ni-ni-gou. The popularity of Ni-ni-gou gradually increased, and so did the interest of researchers. In the 1980s, there were not many research works about Ni-ni-gou. Folk Toys of Henan (1986) was the first work to record a large number of pictures of Ni-ni-gou, which left precious early pictures of Ni-ni-gou for our research, and in the 1990s, Mr. Ni Baocheng's Ni-ni-gou of Huaiyang (1999) was published to provide a large number of pictures of Ni-ni-gou, which provided important information for the research on the change of the types of Ni-ni-gou. (3) Protection of non-heritage. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Ministry of Culture and the Chinese Folk Literary and Artistic Association carried out the folk culture rescue and protection project, which enabled the collection of Ni-ni-gou works, the support of Ni-ni-gou artists, the inheritance of Ni-ni-gou skills, and the dissemination of Ni-ni-gou works. Behind this bright and shiny, Ni-ni-gou art actually hides a serious communication crisis, this model although to a certain extent for Ni-ni-gou momentum, but overall Ni-ni-gou openness is insufficient, unable to form a large-scale mature communication chain.



Figure 32 Henan Folk Toys" Book

Source: <https://image.so.com>

Nowadays, young craftsmen, while inheriting the traditional mud sculpture technique, strive to improve and break the technique of fabricating clay dogs in Huaiyang, and spread the clay dogs to a wider social space. In today's Internet era, the publicity and dissemination of Ni-ni-gou handicraft should change its image in time and target more young groups. According to the data, as of March 2023, 50.1% of Internet users in China are aged 20-39, which is higher than other age groups, and this age group is the most critical group in consumption and cultural needs.

Ni-ni-gou should follow the trend of the times, adopt young communication methods and use social platforms (e.g. new media, etc.) to interact with consumers in a two-



way communication way, and actively excavate and dismantle the cultural connotations of Ni-ni-gou to create practical and ornamental derivatives, so as to attract the audience to participate in the protection and dissemination of Ni-ni-gou.



Figure 33 New and old artists demonstrate their skills together

Source:<https://image.so.com>

### 3.2.5 Increased Government attention

Ni-ni-gou is a unique folk art of clay sculpture in Huaiyang area, Ni-ni-gou is a handicraft passed down from generation to generation by family-style workshops. As Ni-ni-gou is made of mud, it has its own limitations, and the process of making it is relatively cumbersome, but in the market environment, most of the Ni-ni-gou are relatively inexpensive. Most young people feel that the economic returns from making Ni-ni-gou are not high enough, and the money earned is not as good as going out to work. Therefore, more and more young people are not willing to learn the production skills of Ni-ni-gou, resulting in the reduction of the inheritors, Ni-ni-gou slowly fade out of people's vision.

After the founding of New China, the State united "all possible forces" for construction and production through all-round institutional building and social mobilization. In line with this goal, the state began a top-down effort to collect and record folk art of all kinds in order to shape the national identity; in the 1950s, cultural bureaus, art museums, and scientific research institutes at all levels organized staff to travel to various regions to investigate folk art. Researchers and editors revised and adapted folk art based on unified requirements and their own understanding. Through processing and reconstruction, culture and skills from the

folk village are incorporated into the national cultural system. A major breakthrough in the protection of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang originated in the 1980s, when experts and scholars from all over the country came to the Taihao Tomb to investigate and research the Ni-ni-gou, and the relevant data of the Ni-ni-gou had been collected and collated by the Cultural Center of Huaiyang County and researched, and the local government's attention to the Ni-ni-gou was further enhanced. In the 1990s, the Ni-ni-gou went out of the country, and was exported successively to France, Japan, etc. In 2006, the Human Ancestor Festival was held at the Taihao Tomb, which was organized by the Cultural Center of Huaiyang County, with a view to promoting the culture of the human ancestor. In 2006, the Human Ancestor Ceremony held at Taihao Tomb entered the list of the first batch of intangible cultural heritage protection projects of the country, and the Ni-ni-gou were also brought to "fire" as a result. The Henan municipal government organized a seminar in 2009 to discuss how to develop Ni-ni-gou into an industry. In the strategy of "one village, one product", Ni-ni-gou goes hand in hand with local specialty agricultural products, which can also carry commodity value and bring material wealth to the producers. 2014 was included in the list of national intangible cultural heritage protection, and in 2014 Ni-ni-gou was included in the list of representative items of national intangible cultural heritage. The status of Ni-ni-gou is constantly improving, Ni-ni-gou to a broader stage.

With the countryside revitalization strategy put forward by the state in 2018, it is proposed to "promote the revitalization of rural industries, talents, culture, ecology and organization", especially in the cultural aspect, the countryside is the growth space and social soil of traditional culture, which has given birth to a lot of excellent regional culture, and the emphasis on rural culture can inherit the excellent culture of the Chinese nation and improve the national cultural confidence. The importance of rural culture can inherit the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, improve national cultural confidence, but also the use of local characteristics of cultural resources, boosting rural economic development, the implementation of rural tourism and special industries. 2020 Henan Provincial People's Government in the "General Office of the People's Government of Henan Province on the views of accelerating the development of rural tourism," the document put forward to make full use of the folklore of Henan and the resources of the non-heritage, and the development of rural study tours. The above series of policies and measures show that in order to help revitalize the countryside, the government attaches more and more importance to traditional culture, and helps the development of traditional folk art in the countryside through a variety of forms.

The government of Huaiyang has also taken corresponding measures for a series of national policies, first of all, the development of Ni-ni-gou is included in the system of rural revitalization. 2021 July in Huaiyang Longhu East to carry out the "rural revitalization of the beauty of the exhibition". This activity is based on inheritance and innovation, contributing to the revitalization of the cultural industry,

displaying the non-heritage products of Huaiyang County, meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the viewers and mobilizing the public's enthusiasm for the exploration of the non-heritage culture by watching the non-heritage production techniques and processes.



Figure 34 Exhibiting at the Ni-ni-gou Expo  
Source: <https://image.so.com>

Secondly, the government increases the publicity of Ni-ni-gou. In October 2020, China Intangible Cultural Heritage Fair, Huayang Ni-ni-gou hereditary bearer Xu Shuzhang teacher, with the shape of simple, five-color view of the color of the "Ni-ni-gou" to participate in the fair. The theme of this event is to take culture as the soul, let the non-heritage bloom new glory. In this Intangible Cultural Heritage Fair, the crowded scene of Taihao Ling Temple Fair in Huaiyang was used as the background, and Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou had a very close relationship with Taihao Ling Temple Fair, so the background of Taihao Ling Temple Fair was placed in the most eye-catching position on the second floor of the Fair's exhibition hall, which attracted the audience to stop and watch and was shocked by it. This exposition, including not only the non-genetic heritage teacher Xu Shuzhang, former vice minister of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, but also members of the party group of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and other people, as well as tourists from all over the world to come here to watch the exposition, various media. In this exposition, various historical origins, myths and legends of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou and the culture contained in them were told.

Finally, the introduction of Ni-ni-gou craft inheritors to campuses. Combining traditional crafts and culture with art and design majors in colleges and universities can promote the transformation of innovative achievements. Inheritor Shao Bo, who founded the Chenzhou brand 20 years ago, has been invited many times to bring the art of Ni-ni-gou into colleges and universities, primary and secondary school lecture halls, and his studio has received practice tours from many colleges and universities,

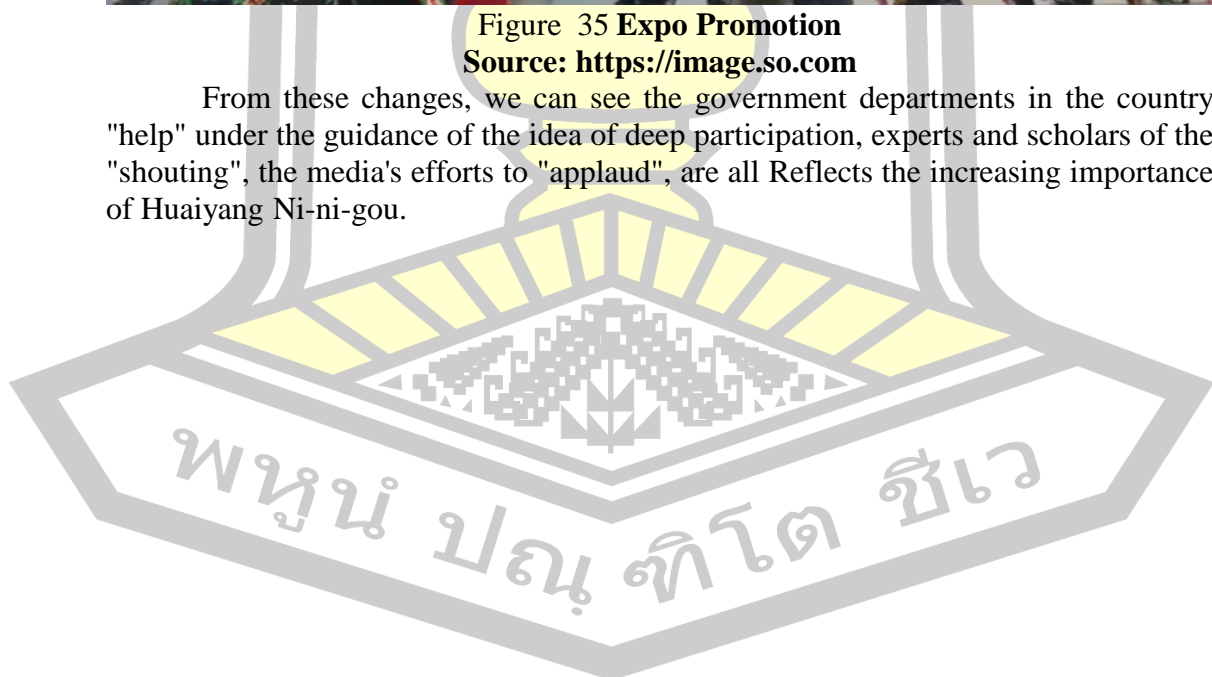


such as Zhengzhou University, Ocean University of China, and Henan Xinxiang College.



Figure 35 Expo Promotion  
Source: <https://image.so.com>

From these changes, we can see the government departments in the country "help" under the guidance of the idea of deep participation, experts and scholars of the "shouting", the media's efforts to "applaud", are all Reflects the increasing importance of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou.





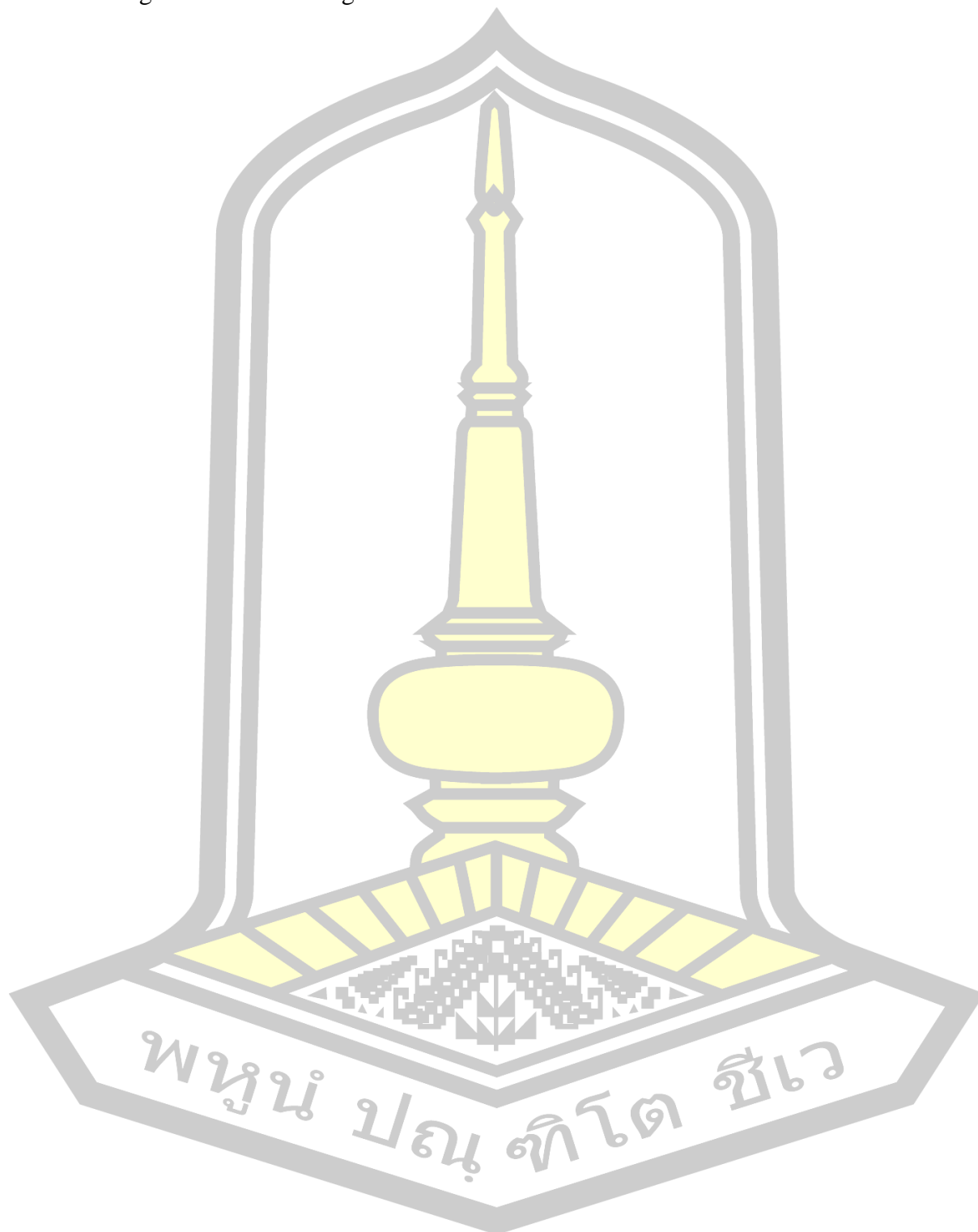
## Conclusion

This chapter discusses the changes of clay dogs in the dimensions of "artwork" and "social process". First of all, from the dimension of artwork, a series of changes have taken place in the production techniques, shapes, and patterns of Ni-ni-gou, and this process is full of debates between tradition and innovation. Ni-ni-gou through generations of "word of mouth" and inheritance, so Ni-ni-gou is "human ancestor master human ancestor girl made people and dogs", no one should change, change "is not a human ancestor master when made people and dogs! ". More than one producer has mentioned that the imagery of clay dogs, i.e., "strange birds and beasts", existed in ancient times. However, on the one hand, some makers have been given the legitimacy of "artistic creation" after becoming cultural inheritors recognized by the state and respected by experts; on the other hand, the Ni-ni-gou have attracted all kinds of buyers, who have put forward different needs, making "the very old ones not sell well! The other side of the coin is that clay dogs attract all kinds of buyers with different needs, making "the old ones not sell well". Therefore, the producers have to "change" to match the positioning of the "artwork" and meet the needs of the market. Almost all of the producers are familiar with the idea of developing new products according to "market demand". However, they also emphasize the importance of tradition. For example, some inheritors believe that "rough, clumsy and chic is the real Ni-ni-gou". This shows that there is an inherent tension between tradition and innovation. Like other cultural products, Ni-ni-gou are easily caught in the dilemma of conflicting values. The cultural value inherited from tradition and the artistic value given to the Ni-ni-gou by the producers through their own creation, as well as the market value recognized through market exchange, are not unified and may be contradictory.

Secondly, from the dimension of social process, the Ni-ni-gou used to be a clay toy for worshiping sacred objects and spreading the grace of ancestors, but today it has become a cultural product, and its cultural connotation and social function have undergone significant changes. With the development of society, people are not bound by some traditional reproductive culture, with their own concepts and subjective ideas, Ni-ni-gou cultural beliefs are diluted, and Ni-ni-gou inheritors continue to decline, resulting in Ni-ni-gou's survival is facing a crisis. However, the introduction of relevant national policies has also promoted the development of Ni-ni-gou, making the inheritance of Ni-ni-gou more diversified, diversified forms of dissemination, and the scope of the audience is also expanding.

Ultimately, the continuous development under the social process promotes the continuous transformation of works of art, and the transformation of works of art promotes the development of the social process, both of which are based on each other, and the invention of the tradition under the dual dimension, adapting to the needs of the current social consumers is feasible, but there is a conflict with the traditional cultural connotation, how should we innovate on the basis of retaining the traditional inheritance is a problem worth thinking about. Therefore, considering the development of traditional cultural connotation and innovation. And then try to show the new design of Ni-ni-gou objects with cartoonized image. In order to ensure the innovative development of Ni-ni-gou, it is also necessary to publicize and promote the

historical value and archaeological value of Ni-ni-gou, and call for the protection of intangible cultural heritage innovation and inheritance.



## CHAPTER IV

### Innovative Design of Ni-ni-gou in the Context of Rural Revitalization

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou in the context of rural revitalization is practiced, and the innovative design is based on the new design of the image of Ni-ni-gou through the shape, color, pattern and carrier of Ni-ni-gou. The innovative design of Henan Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is a collation and application of the previous theoretical analysis. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is regarded as "the living fossil of ancient civilization", its shape, color and pattern have the unique totem culture of the ancient period, especially its bright and vivid color, rich decorative pattern and unique shape, the author extracted the color and symbols with rich cultural connotation for the innovative design, combined with the "Ni-ni-gou" and the "Ni-ni-gou" to complete the new design of the image of the carrier. The author extracted the colors and symbols with rich cultural connotations to carry out innovative design, combined with the traditional dragon shape, and expressed the traditional cultural connotations inherited by the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in the way of cartoon image design, so that the image of the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou with strong local flavor is designed to be a modern mascot with bright lines, colorful, distinctive personality and rich cultural connotations. How to utilize modern figurative IP design to express the new design to convey the cultural and artistic value of "Ni-ni-gou", and how to preserve the tradition and make innovation in the design works are the focuses of this chapter.

#### 4.1 The necessity and feasibility of the new design of Ni-ni-gou in the context of rural revitalization

##### 4.1.1 The Need for a New Design for Ni-ni-gou

The Twentieth National Congress of the CPC emphasized "increasing the protection of cultural relics and cultural heritage, strengthening the protection and inheritance of history and culture in urban and rural construction, and building and using national cultural parks." The state attaches great importance to the inheritance and protection of cultural heritage, and at the same time provides strong policy support and a broad platform for the development of intangible cultural heritage. Under the guidance of the strategy, the Henan government has actively responded to the call to strengthen cultural construction and actively explore various aspects. Taking "Henan TV" as an example, a large number of Henan cultures are "out of the circle", forming cultural influence. This brings more opportunities for the development of intangible cultural heritage in Henan and also brings experience and confidence for the innovative development of Ni-ni-gou.

In the national rural revitalization policy, a variety of non-heritage derivatives of a wide range of different forms, Ni-ni-gou development is also the same, in this context, the point of innovation appears to be extremely important, only with a certain degree of innovation of the goods is enough to let the consumers eye, scrambling to buy. At present, the Ni-ni-gou market has a huge expansion space, Ni-ni-gou image design innovation not only helps its own heritage and development, more conducive to help the rural revitalization of the entire Huaiyang area, through the field investigation method of Ni-ni-gou main sales site - Tai Hao Ling temple research,

summarize the characteristics and shortcomings of its development, clear Ni-ni-gou development of the existing problems and design advantages, to understand the limitations and pain points of the development of the heritage of Ni-ni-gou, and the development of Ni-ni-gou. The limitations and pain points of the inheritance and development of Ni-ni-gou, according to the results of the research to sort out and analyze, for the Ni-ni-gou image design to provide a realistic basis for the necessity of innovative design of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang.

#### **4.1.2 Feasibility of the new Ni-ni-gou design**

The theme of the creation of Henan Ni-ni-gou largely comes from the worship, myths and legends under the primitive totem, which seems to be a simple and straightforward modeling, however, it contains a strong cultural connotation inside. The significance of combining the modern popular fashion elements with the visual image elements of the Ni-ni-gou lies in the fact that the connotation of the ancient traditional folk culture is conveyed through the fashionable technology, so that it can be accepted and appreciated by the modern people. Most of the traditional redesigned commodities on the market at present only inherit the surface image of traditional folk culture, while the cultural connotation contained therein has long disappeared with the passage of time. Therefore, we should pay attention to the style of expression of commodities, but also pay full attention to its inherent beliefs, the use of redesign methods, cultural connotations and style needs to blend, to create a contemporary characteristics, to meet the fashion aesthetic of contemporary people, but also to promote the development of traditional folklore.

To analyze the feasibility of the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou, the following aspects can be considered:

##### **(1) Market Demand and Consumption Trends**

With the diversification of people's aesthetic concepts and the growth of personalized needs, the traditional art market is gradually developing in the direction of creativity, uniqueness and personalization. As a kind of folk art with regional characteristics and cultural charm, Ni-ni-gou has greater market potential. Through innovative design, it can meet the personalized needs of more consumers and broaden the market space.

##### **(2) Cultural heritage and innovative development**

As a part of intangible cultural heritage, Ni-ni-gou carries rich history, culture and folk beliefs. In the process of innovative design, it is necessary to pay attention to the inheritance and protection of traditional culture, and at the same time combine with modern aesthetics and design concepts to carry out skillful integration and innovation. This can not only maintain the artistic charm of Ni-ni-gou, but also give it new connotation of the times, to realize the inheritance of traditional culture and innovative development.

##### **(3) Technical support and innovation capacity**

With the continuous progress of science and technology, new materials, new techniques and digital technology provide more possibilities for the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou. Using these technical means, the upgrading and innovation of the production process can be realized on the basis of maintaining the traditional characteristics of Ni-ni-gou. At the same time, cultivating a design team with innovative ability and design talent is also an important guarantee to promote the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou.



In summary, the feasibility of the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou is high. It has favorable conditions in terms of market demand, cultural heritage and technical support. It provides theoretical support for the image design of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, and offers more possibilities for the inheritance and innovative development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou in the context of rural revitalization.

## **4.2 Design Ideas and Design Positioning of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou**

### **4.2.1 Design thinking**

With the quality of life in China, the degree of culture, art appreciation taste rapidly enhance, clay fabricated "Ni-ni-gou" has long lost the mass base, unable to meet the needs of people's material culture, in the inheritance of the continuous development, the design of home and cultural and creative products in line with the aesthetic characteristics of the people of the moment, in traditional Inheritance in the continuous development, design to meet the current aesthetic characteristics of people's homes and cultural and creative products, in the traditional "Ni-ni-gou" on the shape of innovation, manufacturing to adapt to the modern needs of the Huaiyang "Ni-ni-gou" products, "Ni-ni-gou" inheritance and development of the most important.

The culture contained in Ni-ni-gou should be passed on continuously, and the innovation should pay attention to the cultural semantics embedded in it. In the whole design process, how to grasp the elements of modeling, pattern and color continuation, as well as how to collide and combine traditional and modern culture to achieve the final effect of the design, is an important issue faced by designers.

Ni-ni-gou is a work of art relying on the Taihao Mausoleum, a large-scale mausoleum and temple built to commemorate the Taihao Fuxi Clan, the "head of the Three Emperors", which is one of the first batch of national key cultural relics protection units. Explore the dragon culture, trace the dragon totem, here is the recognized source. I examined some of the historical and cultural monuments within the Tai Hao Mausoleum, step into the Tai Hao Mausoleum, the ancient complex, everywhere you can see the image of the dragon, some coiled in the stone columns, some flying in the paintings in the building, these different forms, vivid image of the Dragon Totem, highlighting the Tai Hao Mausoleum and the dragon culture of the profound origin.

Zuo Zhuan - Zhaogong seventeen years" wrote: "the big 皞 clan (i.e., Fuxi) to the dragon discipline, so for the dragon division and the dragon name." The historical record - supplement the three emperors of the book "cloud:" Fuxi has a dragon Rui, to the dragon discipline officials, the number is called the dragon division." From this, it is easy to see that, regardless of the folklore that has been passed down for thousands of years or the historical records presented in writing, the claim that Fuxi created the dragon totem is irrefutable. In the present Unity Heaven Hall of Taihao Mausoleum, the art form of stone carving reproduces the map of Fuxi's holy relics, as shown in the picture.



Figure 36 **Fuxi Mural in Taihao Mausoleum**  
**Source: Author's own photos**

Tai Hao Mausoleum staff said, Fu Xi's first realization of the great integration of the various tribes of the Chinese nation, he synthesized the characteristics of the original totems of the tribes, such as the horse's head, deer's horns, the body of the snake, fish scales, eagle's claws, etc., to create a new totem, "dragon", which is the origin of the dragon. The dragon totem, which was born in the Fuxi period, has been passed down until today. As the dragon totem created by Fuxi is a recognized symbol of the fusion of various tribes in the ancient times, symbolizing the unity of the nation, so the descendants also have the heir of the dragon, the descendants of Huaxia said.

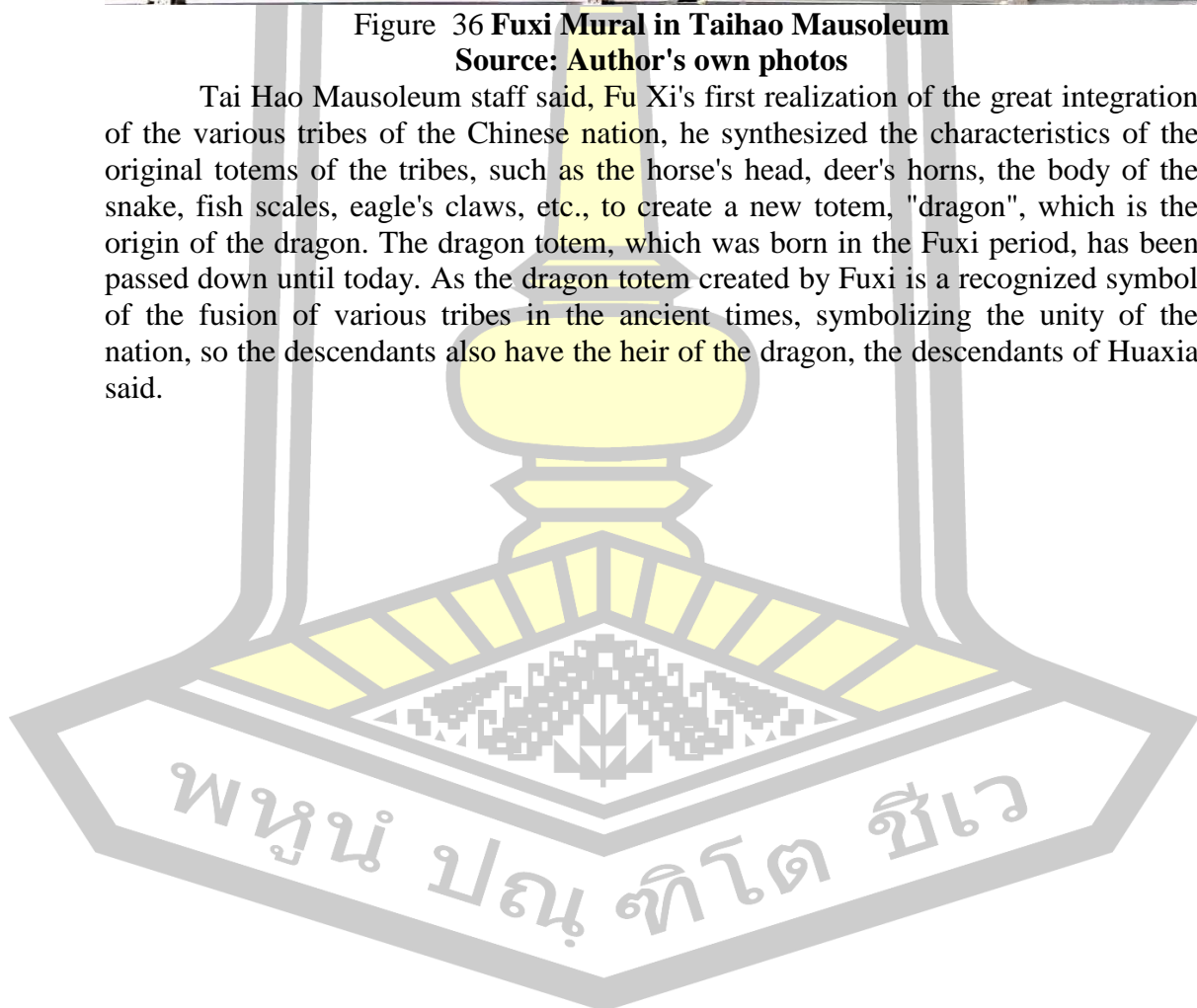






Figure 37 **Dragon Sculpture in Taihao Tomb**

Source: Author's own photos

The most unique and eye-catching totem shape of the "Ni-ni-gou" is the exaggerated and bizarre shape. These shapes are created by artists based on their own imagination or images from myths and legends. This kind of modeling may appear in ghosts and gods novels, but it is impossible to have similar prototypes in our real life. So the specific shape of the human ancestor monkey, nine-headed lion, unicorn and so on. The "dragon" is familiar to Chinese children, and the image of the dragon in mythological stories is often a representative of justice. Our children of the Chinese nation is also known as the "descendants of the dragon", visible "dragon" in the hearts

of our Chinese people occupy a pivotal position, while the "dragon" is also a symbol of the Chinese nation. Combining modern fashion aesthetics with craft aesthetics and conveying the message in visual form, the Clay Dog can be more adapted to the aesthetics of modern people, while retaining the traditional characteristics. In the new design, the authors chose to use the traditional Chinese dragon image as the basis, combined with the unique modeling style of Ni-ni-gou, to fully demonstrate the artistic characteristics and highlight the traditional features. Combined with modern image design, the Ni-ni-gou is deeply integrated and creatively transformed to create cultural and creative derivatives. Let the public's vision follow the graphic symbols to understand the cultural meaning behind, the combination of culture and tourism common development, so as to realize the cultural heritage of Ni-ni-gou.

#### **4.2.2 Design orientation**

Ni-ni-gou because of their own material limitations, in recent years the consumer group shrinks, generally only some of the tourists to the Tai Hao mausoleum tour and some temple incense burners to buy, and Ni-ni-gou whether from the shape or color patterns are unique, in the production of materials to be changed will certainly increase the consumer group. At the same time Ni-ni-gou is also a kind of traditional folk art, for traditional handicrafts, now pay most attention to the group of young people, this part of the consumer has a high cultural literacy and more advanced consumer concept. They favor cultural artwork, like to pursue the spiritual value of artwork, and prefer to collect and inherit traditional culture and non-heritage products, for the modern cultural design consumption also has a high degree of sensibility and purchasing power.

Young people are gradually becoming the main consumer, they have their own unique consumer concepts and have a certain aesthetic. They attach importance to quality, have strong brand awareness, and like to combine the new trend of cultural and creative design consumption with traditional cultural products. They pay attention to personalized consumption, like to follow the crowd, like to pursue different products, and are more inclined to try new consumption methods and unique consumption experience.

To sum up, by combining the original characteristics of Ni-ni-gou, integrating the patterns and colors of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou into modern cartoonized image, and integrating tradition and modernity, and by redesigning the image of Ni-ni-gou, refining the traditional image of Ni-ni-gou and integrating tradition, modernity and innovation, the market of Ni-ni-gou folk culture image products will be effectively explored. Therefore, in the present design, through the cartoon exaggeration of the normal image of Ni-ni-gou, in order to make the goods can satisfy the shoppers of all ages. At the same time, through the bold attempt on the color of the Ni-ni-gou, so that the goods to meet the various aesthetic needs of shoppers.



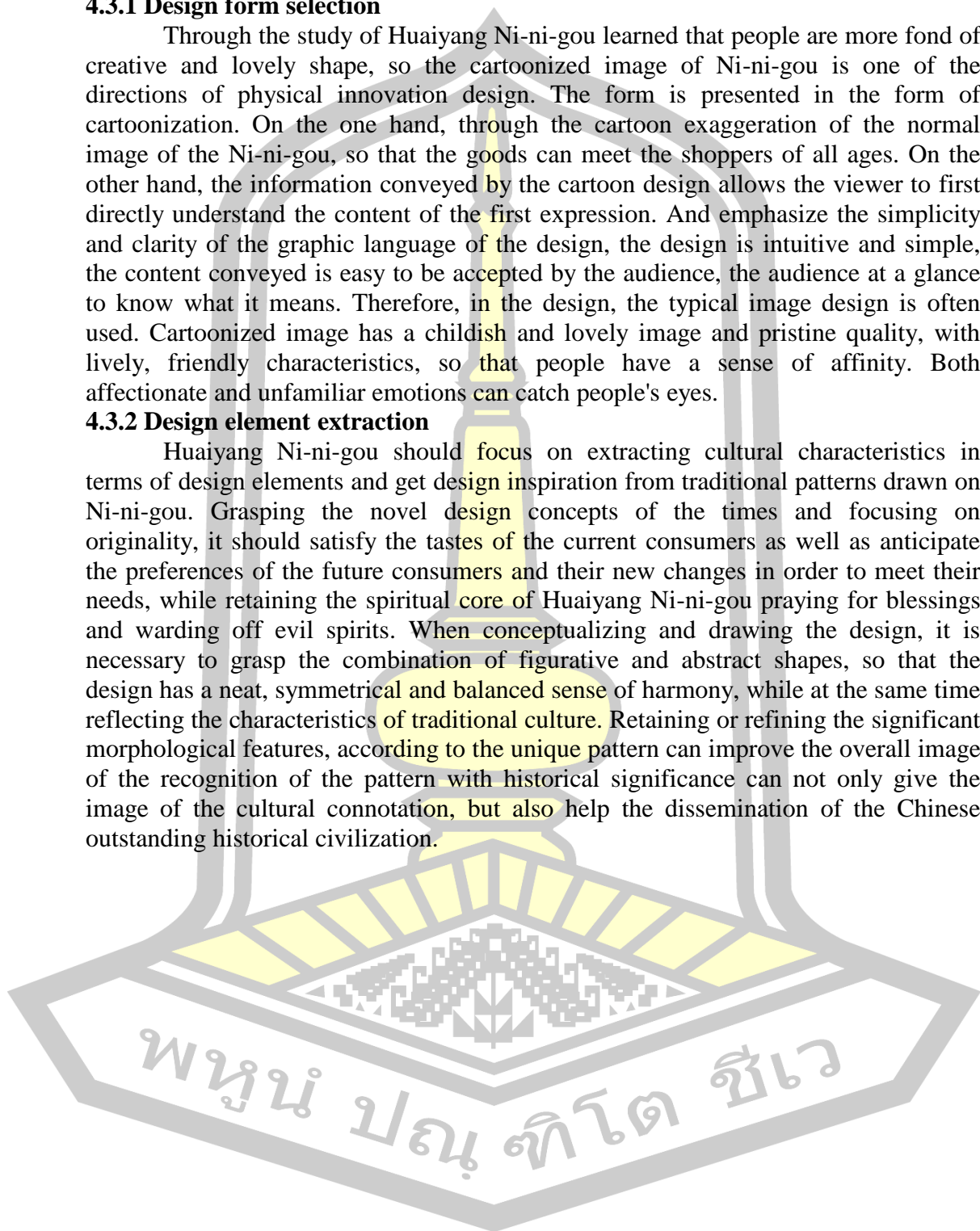
### 4.3 Physical design of Ni-ni-gou products

#### 4.3.1 Design form selection

Through the study of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou learned that people are more fond of creative and lovely shape, so the cartoonized image of Ni-ni-gou is one of the directions of physical innovation design. The form is presented in the form of cartoonization. On the one hand, through the cartoon exaggeration of the normal image of the Ni-ni-gou, so that the goods can meet the shoppers of all ages. On the other hand, the information conveyed by the cartoon design allows the viewer to first directly understand the content of the first expression. And emphasize the simplicity and clarity of the graphic language of the design, the design is intuitive and simple, the content conveyed is easy to be accepted by the audience, the audience at a glance to know what it means. Therefore, in the design, the typical image design is often used. Cartoonized image has a childish and lovely image and pristine quality, with lively, friendly characteristics, so that people have a sense of affinity. Both affectionate and unfamiliar emotions can catch people's eyes.

#### 4.3.2 Design element extraction

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou should focus on extracting cultural characteristics in terms of design elements and get design inspiration from traditional patterns drawn on Ni-ni-gou. Grasping the novel design concepts of the times and focusing on originality, it should satisfy the tastes of the current consumers as well as anticipate the preferences of the future consumers and their new changes in order to meet their needs, while retaining the spiritual core of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou praying for blessings and warding off evil spirits. When conceptualizing and drawing the design, it is necessary to grasp the combination of figurative and abstract shapes, so that the design has a neat, symmetrical and balanced sense of harmony, while at the same time reflecting the characteristics of traditional culture. Retaining or refining the significant morphological features, according to the unique pattern can improve the overall image of the recognition of the pattern with historical significance can not only give the image of the cultural connotation, but also help the dissemination of the Chinese outstanding historical civilization.



Therefore, the author has made a list of common patterns, with the sun pattern, female yin pattern, flower and grass pattern, dotted line pattern and so on.

常见纹样提取

	太阳纹	
	点线纹	
	花草纹	
	女阴纹	

Figure 38 Common Pattern Extraction

Source: Author's own design

In this paper, the female yin pattern, flower and grass pattern, and dot and line pattern are mainly selected to be refined and transformed, which is a new pattern formed by taking the center line as the axis of symmetry, with symmetry on the left and right sides, and curved lines. Innovative design on the inheritance of traditional Ni-ni-gou pattern is in line with the concept of protection and innovation of intangible cultural heritage in the context of rural revitalization.

#### 4.3.3 Color selection and matching

Color is a very important part of the design elements, different colors have different attributes and qualities, color is the primary factor that affects the viewer's aesthetic judgment, but also an important basis for defining the beauty of design works. Among them, the saturation of color tone and the treatment of contrast can affect the consumer's mood. After a number of experiments, the image of the final color matching extracted from the traditional Ni-ni-gou color matching, the traditional Ni-ni-gou with a black base, the main colors are red, yellow, green, white, peach red five, color contrast is strong, but without losing harmony. I adjusted its saturation, brightness, and color restructuring after the completion of the Ni-ni-gou image of

color, warm and cold collocation, resulting in a stronger visual impact, so that the character image more vitality.

In the overall design, retaining the most important color characteristics of Ni-ni-gou, the five colors of green, red, yellow, white and black are processed with uniform color values, black and white maintain the original purity, increase the fuchsia, the red luminance is reduced, and at the same time, increase the purity of green and yellow, so as to achieve the effect of bright and vivid, but not to make people feel that the colors are harsh and exaggeratedly high-profile. Young consumers are always prone to be attracted to the eye at the first time by brightly colored things, the use of these five colors, with the most energetic tones and black and white two neutral colors, with a bright, eye-catching visual effect.

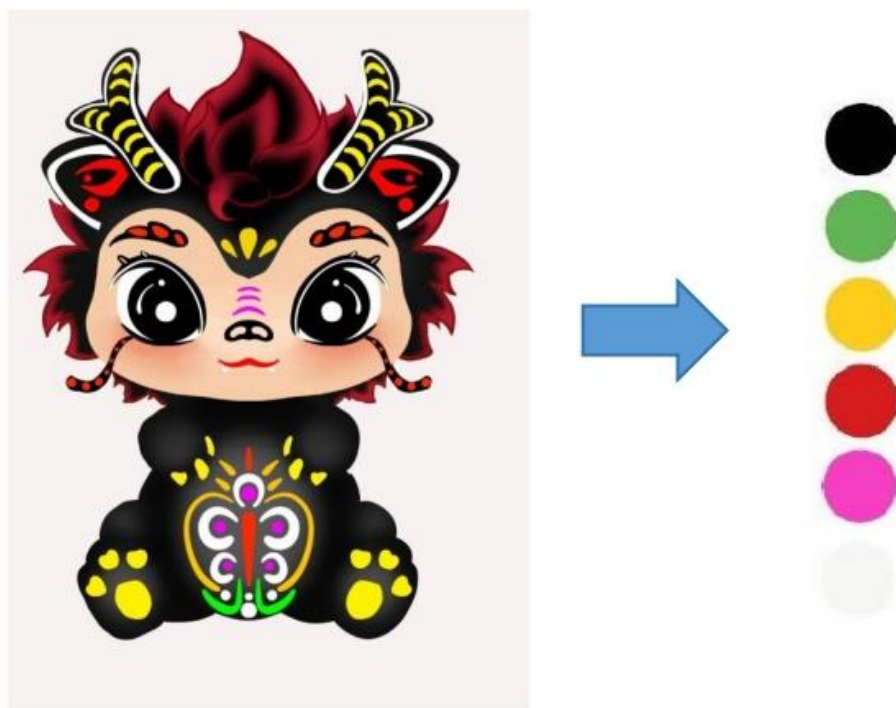


Figure 39 Color Selection  
Source: Author's own design

#### 4.3.4 Physical design process

First, the initial conceptualization. In the basic shape, first extracted to retain the main features of the mud Ni-ni-gou, black background-based, the use of the five elements of color, as well as flowers and plants, female yin pattern and other innovative design, in order to set off its body more historical connotation of patterns and colors. Secondly, combined with the local Taihao mausoleum Fuxi created the dragon totem, symbolizing national unity, highlighting the heir of the dragon, the descendants of China. Adopting the traditional Chinese dragon image as the basis, retaining the characteristics of the Ni-ni-gou, adapting to the aesthetic needs of modern people, highlighting its anthropomorphic features.

In the overall image shaping, the majority of round arc lines, the overall more full and rounded, compared to straight lines, folding lines, round arc lines can enhance the image of the sense of intimacy. The proportion of the image is set as a two-headed body, which gives people a sense of being cute and non-aggressive. In the head,

which takes up the largest part of the figure, the hair is interlaced with multiple lines to emphasize the hair on the dragon's head, which is more visually appealing.



**Figure 40 Preliminary Ideas**  
**Source: Author's own design**

Secondly, multi-angle modeling design, taking into account the integrity of the later stage, the drawing of the back and side drawings, the back drawing is mainly hair drawing, to show the hierarchy, as well as the spatial relationship between the front and back. The side is the most difficult part to draw, taking into account the changes of the five senses as well as the layering of the hair, which was repeatedly modified.





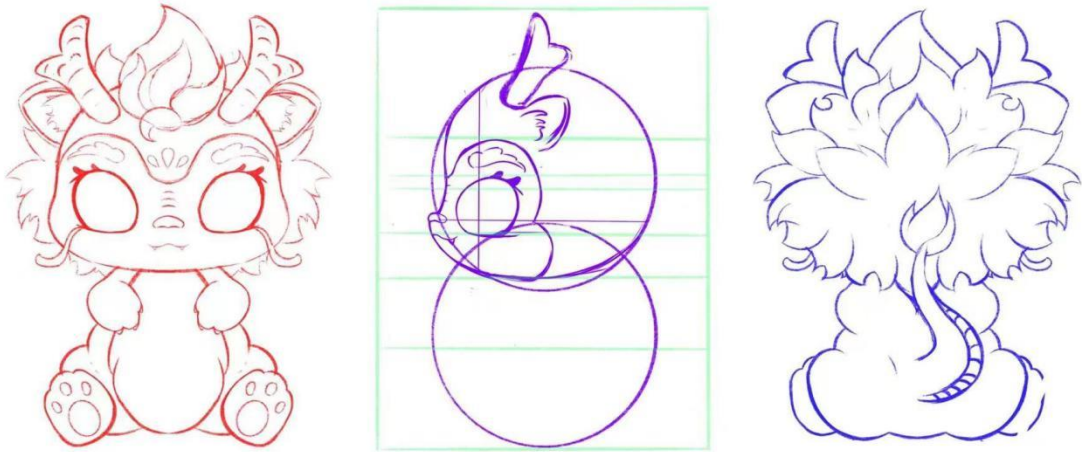


Figure 41 **Painting Process**  
Source: Author's own design

In addition, due to the characteristics of the raw materials and technology of the Ni-ni-gou, in order to highlight its glaze characteristics, in the shape of the appropriate amount of highlights and shadows to create a visual sense of three-dimensional, and in line with the characteristics of the traditional Ni-ni-gou material, in order to facilitate the subsequent design practice. Finally, in order to make the newly designed image appearance more in line with consumer demand, with affinity, rich cultural connotation and personalized design, after many revisions and experiments, in the traditional Ni-ni-gou image inheritance and innovation under the design of the "dragon mud mud" image (as shown in the figure).



Figure 42 **Finalization of the new design image**  
Source: Author's own design

The dragon's horns and face adopt a symmetrical structure, and the mouth reveals small teeth in the form of a smile, which enhances the image's sense of mischievousness. The bangs of the image adopt rounded lines, and at the same time create a sense of three-dimensionality, making the image more anthropomorphic and giving the image a gentle and lovely character trait. The blush on the face and the "female yin pattern" on the clothes emphasize the female characteristics of the image and enhance its cultural connotations, and the face is painted with a flower inlay between the eyebrows, which is one of the ancient women's decorative techniques, and was more prevalent in the Tang Dynasty.

Secondly, the color and pattern match. The newly designed image, the whole body uses black, retaining the traditional Ni-ni-gou black glaze color. The face does not use black on the one hand, highlighting the image of cartoonization and anthropomorphism, on the other hand, highlighting the image of modernity and fashionable intent to attract the pursuit of trends in young consumer groups.

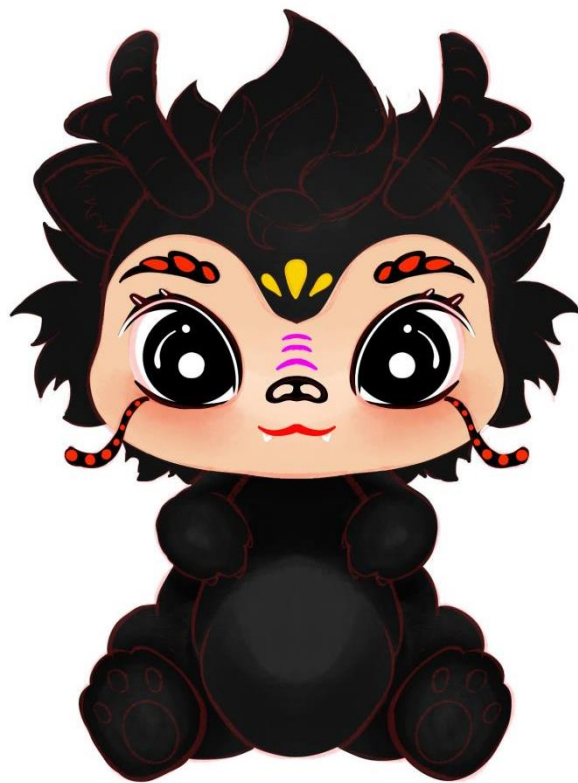


Figure 43 Overall Color  
Source: Author's own design

The hair adopts a deep red gradient, highlighting the dragon's head hair and making it more figurative, retaining the dragon's horns using yellow lines, highlighting the cleverness and wisdom, and retaining the dragon's whiskers using red polka dots for decoration. Body part of the symmetrical pattern, drawing on the beauty of the axial symmetry of the mud Ni-ni-gou pattern, this mud Ni-ni-gou totem in the use of lines and the distribution of the composition are inherited from the

ancestors of Wanqiu for the symmetry of the beauty of the ancient cognition of the form. When redesigning the Ni-ni-gou totem pattern, the author considers the symmetry of the shape and the balanced distribution of the color, which makes the picture more vivid and formally beautiful. As discussed by the author in Chapter 2, the colors of Ni-ni-gou totem patterns are mainly divided into five colors: red, yellow, white, black and green, but in the actual drawing, there are not only these five colors, the author found that in addition to these five colors, there are also peach, vermilion, sky blue, etc. When summarizing and refining the Ni-ni-gou totem patterns, the author selects representative Ni-ni-gou totem patterns, pixelates the colors, extracts the main colors, and then extracts the colors to make the picture more vivid and formally beautiful. When summarizing and refining the Ni-ni-gou totem patterns, the author selects the representative Ni-ni-gou totem patterns, pixelates them, extracts the main colors and unifies these colors, and determines the color specification for use, so as to better reflect the beauty of the form of Ni-ni-gou totem patterns. After summarizing and refining, the shapes and colors will be more concise and condensed, and after applying them to the overall visual redesign of the Ni-ni-gou totem pattern, the image characteristics will be more distinctive and more in line with the aesthetic requirements of modern people.

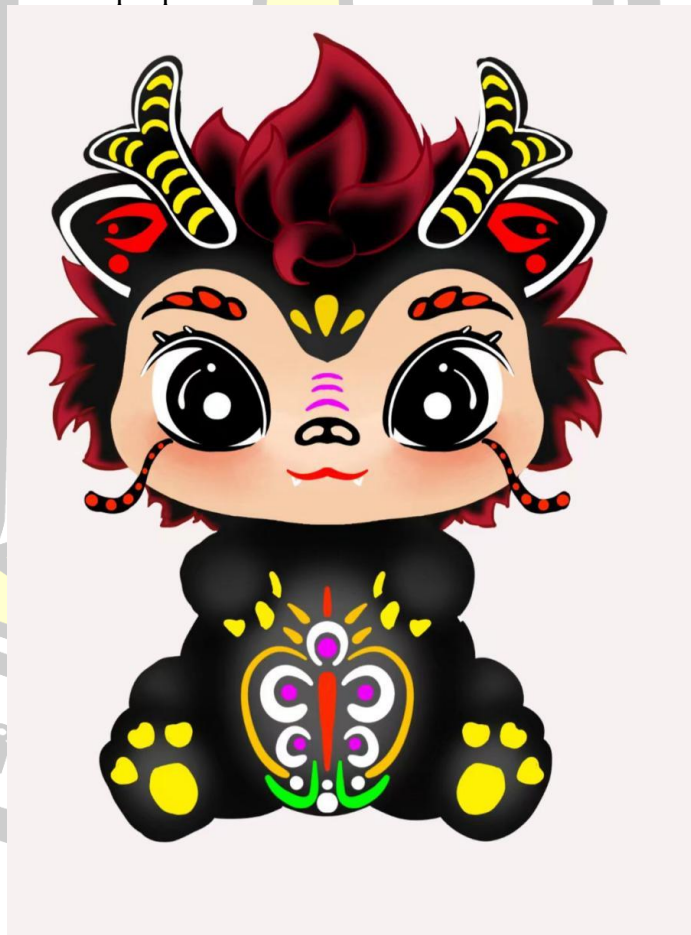


Figure 44 Ni-ni-gou's new design  
Source: Author's own design

## 4.4 Ni-ni-gou Physical Design Display

### 4.4.1 Ni-ni-gou Physical Design Case 1

This design is based on the Huayang Ni-ni-gou combined with the dragon image as the design prototype, in-depth analysis and collation of the original Ni-ni-gou art features, the Ni-ni-gou shape, color, decoration extraction, selection of representative decorations, the "new" design. The new design image is rounded, colorful, richly decorated, and at the same time has strong local folk cultural connotations, so in the "new" Ni-ni-gou is also known as the "dragon mud mud" design, not only to innovate, but also to retain the original cultural connotations of Huayang Ni-ni-gou. Connotation. The image of dragon is the expression of Chinese traditional image, Chinese people are the descendants of the dragon, and regard the dragon as the symbol of civilization and spiritual totem. It carries a good meaning of bravery and advancement, and good luck.

In the innovative transformation design of the Ni-ni-gou, the modern cartoon image is adopted in the shape, and the whole is more rounded. Chinese traditional auspicious culture, to "fat" and "lucky" as the central concept, and the two itself is interlinked, each other, because the blessed people in the traditional concept should be to appear "rich kind, so the dragon is not only to retain the image, but also to make the dragon look "lucky". When designing the image, the dragon is also made to look "blessed", which not only retains the traditional cultural connotation but also looks very pleasant and lovely. Color in the clay sculpture itself on the basis of the original color of the appropriate addition of its similar colors, the two together to retain the original strong contrast, bright colors and make the overall color more relevant, more modern. Decorated with representative patterns, the female yin pattern and floral pattern, mostly on the animal's cheeks and torso, signifying good luck and fortune. The shape subverts the image of the primitive dragon, placing both hands on the stomach, which is more adorable. The color and decoration not only retain the original flavor but also combine with modern design, so that the image of dragon mud mud can be accepted by more people, and better to inherit the excellent traditional folk culture.

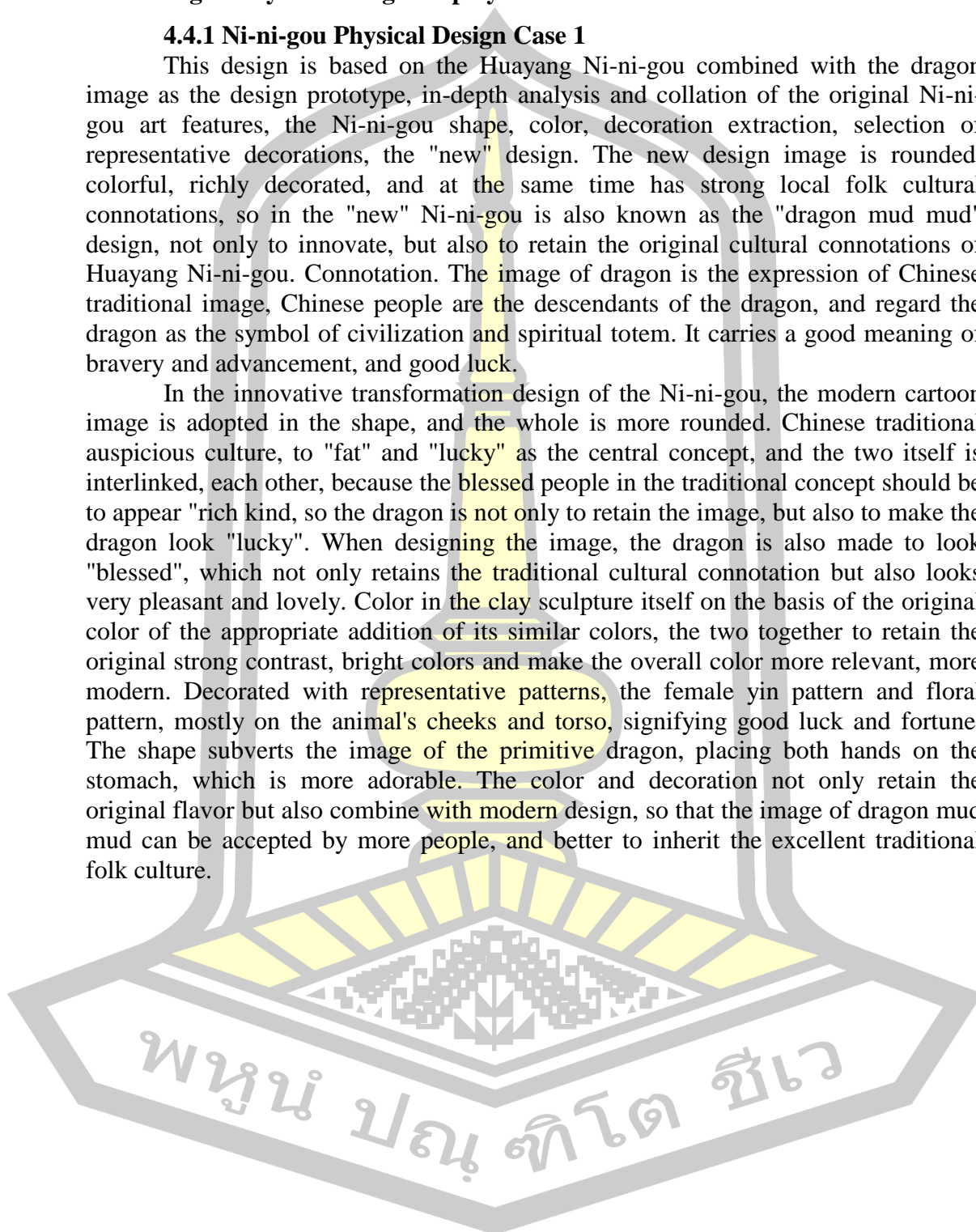






Figure 45 Three views of the new Ni-ni-gou design

Source: Author's own design

#### 4.4.2 Ni-ni-gou Physical Design Case 2

For the first version of the "dragon mud mud" image is the design program, the author through the line to seek tourists, craftsmen and other different groups of this new design image survey and visit and targeted modification of the views put forward, most of the groups think that cartoonish image, vivid three-dimensional image of the original Ni-ni-gou unique cultural connotations have produced Destruction, and is not more suitable for the recreation of the Ni-ni-gou. Therefore, according to the summarization and sorting of opinions, the author carried out an updated new design.

First, the initial conceptualization. In the basic modeling, first extracted and retained the unique pattern modeling of Ni-ni-gou, and appropriate transformation, in order to set off its body more rich in the essence of the connotation pattern. Secondly, the original shape of the clay dog is retained on the basis of the plane of the figurative expression, and the clay dog itself is retained with the auspicious symbolism of praying to the gods to eliminate disasters, take refuge, and blessing of peace.

พหุ ประโยชน์ ชั่ว



Figure 46 New design line drawing

Source: Author's own design

In the shaping of the overall image, the outer contour retains the characteristics of the dragon image, and the pattern in the picture mostly adopts the existing female yin pattern, flower and grass pattern, and dot and line pattern to retain the traditional characteristics and symbolism of the Ni-ni-gou. The design of the pattern is mostly based on orderly dots, lines and surfaces laid out or sequentially arranged, natural and random, and each line and ornament has a pattern of change. On the outline line, try to draw comfortable and smooth, which is expected to visually add some mildness and softness to the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, to draw closer to the distance of young consumers, and at the same time to enhance the safety of the product. The proportion of the head, body and feet of the Ni-ni-gou has been improved, which makes the new design more aesthetic and harmonized.

Secondly, the color of the Ni-ni-gou totem pattern is mainly divided into five colors: red, yellow, white, black and green, but in the actual drawing is not the only five, the author in the field investigation, found that in addition to these five colors, there are peach red, sky blue and other colors, the author used green, white and yellow to draw lines of varying lengths and different sizes of the dots, in the traditional five-color basis to increase the brightness and purity of color, so that the color is more rich. The author uses green, white and yellow to draw short and long lines and dots of

different sizes. The aesthetic characteristics of the colors of the Ni-ni-gou are suitable for the folk customs and traditions of coloring, which expresses people's love and yearning for a better life in the future. ▲



Figure 47 New Ni-ni-gou design  
Source: Author's own design

This design scheme has been changed in the previous version of the design, in-depth analysis and collation of the original artistic characteristics of the clay dog, selecting representative ornaments, "new" design. First of all, the author first planarized the original shape of the clay dog, the outline of the shape of the more rounded lines, the internal pattern of the expression of the dots and lines, the use of color in the facial features, as close as possible to the original color of the clay dog, such as the eyes, the use of white ring to express the outer contour of the eyes; the mouth part of the performance of the combination of red and white. In the treatment of hair, the author did not carry out all-black filling, or gradient layering, but the use of orange and red for line and surface embellishment, you can distinguish the dragon's hair. Decorated with representative patterns, the female yin pattern and flower and grass pattern for decoration, mostly appearing in the animal's torso, signifying good luck and fortune. The shape reverses the image of the primitive dragon, and the sleek lines are more adorable. The color and decoration not only retain the original flavor but also combine with modern design, so that this flat new image can be accepted by more people, and better to inherit the excellent traditional folk culture. Through this kind of flat modeling treatment, it provides a reference for the later redesign modeling.



Figure 48 New Ni-ni-gou design (carapace outline drawing)

**Source: Author's own design**

On the basis of the front performance, the author of this new image and make changes in the shape, add the performance of the side image of the dragon body, so that the viewer more intuitive to see the overall shape of the dragon.

The new design image of the plane form of expression, colorful, rich decorative patterns, while having a strong local folk cultural connotations, so in the "new" Ni-ni-gou design, both innovation, but also to retain the essence of the original cultural connotations of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. Combining the modern fashion elements with the visual image elements of the Ni-ni-gou, the significance of which lies in transferring the connotation of the ancient traditional folk culture through fashionable technology, so as to be accepted and appreciated by modern people. Most of the traditional re-designed commodities on the market at present only inherit the surface image of traditional folk culture, while the cultural connotations contained therein have long disappeared with the passage of time. In the current digital era, simple and flat visual expression more dominate the market, by the user's pursuit of like, so in the design of product style, must follow the pace of the times, and keep pace with the times. That is, we should pay attention to the style of the expression of the goods, but also pay full attention to its inherent beliefs, the use of redesign methods, the connotation of culture and style needs to be integrated, the traditional graphics for refining, sorting and organizing, and its integration into the contemporary products, to create visual merchandise with the characteristics of the times, so that in order to satisfy the fashion aesthetic interest at the same time, but also be able to promote the development of traditional folklore, to promote the culture of mud Ni-ni-gou with the better connect with the times.



#### 4.5 Thoughts and discussions on the new design of Ni-ni-gou

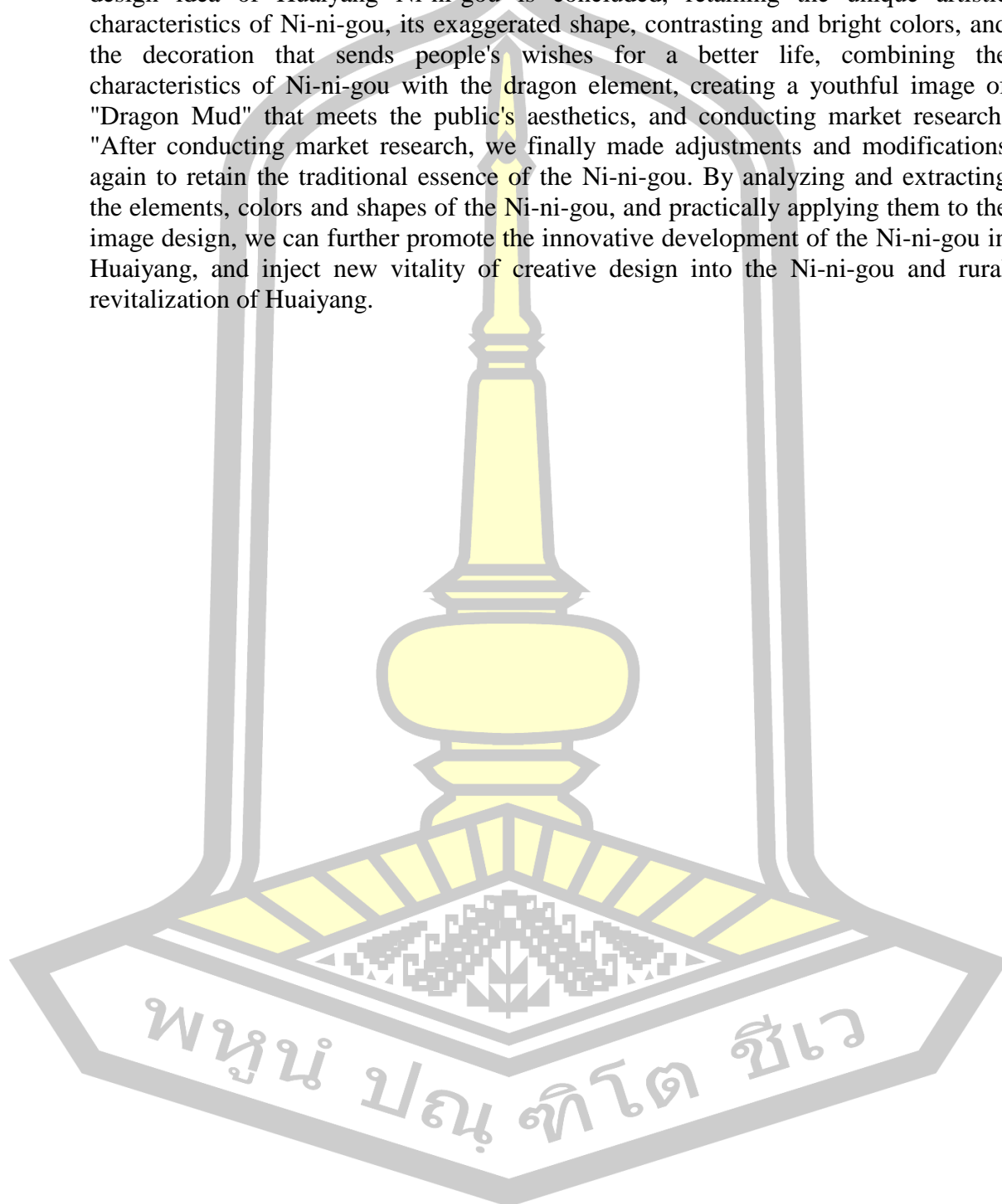
Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou itself exists as a three-dimensional modeling, the culture itself has a strong excavation. In today's society, the design trend has tended to be simple flat design style will be the perfect combination of Ni-ni-gou culture and modern design is imperative. First of all, from the modeling, in the full extraction of iconic modeling elements, the use of modern design methods, the original modeling bold innovation, giving the modeling with new design connotations. Secondly, in terms of color, make full use of the principle of five-color view, respect the original culture based on the modeling and pattern with innovative design. Finally, in the totem pattern, after digging deeply into the cultural connotation of mud Ni-ni-gou, according to the specific cultural elements for element extraction, the extracted elements for comparison, generalization, the use of image creativity and other design methods will be deconstructed elements of the redesign, and the new concept of modeling and color restructuring, the formation of a new modern design, and will be applied to the product, to play to maximize the value.

For Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, the author has carried out the design of new image, a cartoonish image expression, through the modern trend of IP image expression of traditional Ni-ni-gou modeling, in the modeling performance is more modern trend, color, pattern is more refined, more adapted to the aesthetics of the modern young people, Ni-ni-gou is rooted in the folk culture, its modeling, color and ornamentation, both in China's rural areas, the special social and cultural structure of the common collective aesthetic consciousness. Its shape, color and decoration are not only the common collective aesthetic consciousness formed by the special social and cultural structure of rural areas in China, but also reflect the uniqueness of the consciousness. The Ni-ni-gou is a kind of folk art, and the new design has lost the essential expression, leaving the most primitive connotations such as praying for blessings and reproduction unexpressed. So it is not in line with the traditional invention and not recognized, so the design was carried out again.

In the new design, the author adopts a flat image expression, in terms of styling design, the author improved the head and body ratio of the clay dog, which makes the prototype in the view more suitable for the aesthetics of the current public. On the outer contour line, the author tries to draw as comfortable and smooth as possible, which is to visually add some mildness and softness to the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, and bring it closer to the distance of young consumers. In the pattern decoration, a variety of dots and lines to express, while retaining the original pattern and the basic meaning of praying for blessings, while drawing inspiration from other mascots, integration, and thus to design a new image. Finally, in the color selection, I think the original five colors are still retained, appropriate integration of blue tones, saturation and brightness can be adjusted to cope with different environmental strategies. This facilitates the propagation, application and upgrading of the image in the later stage, leaving space for the future development of Ni-ni-gou. The overall style of Ni-ni-gou is serious and cute, eye-catching and bright. The improved Huaoyang Ni-ni-gou is expected to be better adapted to the modern social environment and to seek more possibilities for the combination of tradition and modernity.

## Conclusion

This chapter describes the innovative design of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. Through the analysis of the necessity and feasibility of the innovative design of Ni-ni-gou, the design idea of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is concluded, retaining the unique artistic characteristics of Ni-ni-gou, its exaggerated shape, contrasting and bright colors, and the decoration that sends people's wishes for a better life, combining the characteristics of Ni-ni-gou with the dragon element, creating a youthful image of "Dragon Mud" that meets the public's aesthetics, and conducting market research. "After conducting market research, we finally made adjustments and modifications again to retain the traditional essence of the Ni-ni-gou. By analyzing and extracting the elements, colors and shapes of the Ni-ni-gou, and practically applying them to the image design, we can further promote the innovative development of the Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, and inject new vitality of creative design into the Ni-ni-gou and rural revitalization of Huaiyang.



## CHAPTER V

### Summary, discussion and recommendations

#### 5.1 Research Summary

The theme of this study is "Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province: Traditional The invention of Folk Clay Art in the Context of Rural Revitalization". This paper takes the rural revitalization strategy as the research background, and based on the traditional invention, it elaborates on the historical development, artistic characteristics and cultural connotation of clay dogs in Huaiyang, Henan Province, and analyzes and explains in detail the re-invention of clay dogs under the dual dimension and the innovative design of clay dogs in Huaiyang. There are three research objectives: 1) to study the historical development of clay dogs in Huaiyang, Henan Province; 2) to study the traditional invention of clay dogs under the dimensions of "artwork" and "social process"; and 3) to create a design of clay dogs that conforms to the traditional invention law of clay dogs. The results of the study are as follows.

##### Historical Development of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province

To study the historical and cultural background of Ni-ni-gou in Huaiyang, Henan Province, and to conduct in-depth exploration in the direction of the history of Huaiyang, the functions of Ni-ni-gou in different periods, as well as the artistic value and cultural connotation. Huaiyang has a history of more than 8,000 years, from the founding of the capital by Fuxi to the realization of the first great integration of the Chinese nation, which raised the dawn of Chinese civilization. The creation of the Dragon Totem has given the Chinese nation a symbol of unity and solidarity, and has become the emblem of the Chinese nation. The creation of the Eight Trigrams of Heaven reveals the laws of nature and enables mankind to know the world for the first time. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou originated from the legend of Fuxi Nuwa's "Tuan Clay Creation", which was initially a servant for Fuxi's ancestor to guard the mausoleum, and is a clay toy survived from the ancient times. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou have unique colors, magnificent decorations, strange shapes, their style is ancient, simple, revealing the charm of ancient times, a true record of the early development of Chinese civilization trajectory. Through the exploration of the shape, pattern, color and production process of Ni-ni-gou, we learned the artistic value and cultural connotation of Ni-ni-gou. Therefore, it is easy to see from the artistic characteristics of Ni-ni-gou that they have great potential for innovative new designs. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou contain extremely rich artistic creation value, which provides a solid design basis and reference elements for the new design of Ni-ni-gou.

##### Ni-ni-gou Invented in Double Dimension

This chapter summarizes and analyzes the invention of Huaiyang clay dogs under the dimensions of "artwork" and "social process". This chapter summarizes and analyzes the inventions of Huaiyang clay dogs in terms of shape, color, and pattern in the dimension of artwork. The study shows that, in terms of color, the original five-color view has distinctive philosophical thoughts, and the color view of Ni-ni-gou "with black as the supreme and five colors as the correct" echoes with China's traditional aesthetics, with rich aesthetic connotation and life tension. China's

traditional view of the five colors is a derivative of the more mature yin-yang and five elements doctrine. It is believed that the five elements represent gold, wood, water, fire and earth, which are the five elements that build everything, with rich philosophical culture and spiritual connotation. However, the traditional five colors can no longer meet the needs of modern people, so the traditional invention was carried out, and the colors were added on the basis of retaining the traditional five colors, which meets the aesthetic needs of contemporary people. In terms of material, young inheritors in order to adapt to the development of modern society has made innovations, produced a ceramic texture of Ni-ni-gou, because the change of material makes the Ni-ni-gou look more colorful, lighter and easy to save, but the change of material whether it affects the expression of the meaning of the Ni-ni-gou, there is a debate, the old inheritors believe that the change of material has destroyed the traditional connotations, so both to retain the traditional connotations and popular recognition of the Ni-ni-gou, the traditional connotations of the Ni-ni-gou, the old inheritors believe that the traditional connotations, and the traditional connotations. Therefore, it is necessary to design Ni-ni-gou that can retain the traditional connotation and are recognized by the public. Artwork stage only discusses the color, shape, material and other changes, and with the development of the social process, Ni-ni-gou in order to meet the market has presented what social change, first, the positioning of the change, from the ancient sacrificial offerings to the modern society known as a tourist souvenir, second, with the transformation of people's cultural beliefs, the past Ni-ni-gou reproductive culture in the gradual weakening of the last, the revitalization of the countryside policy put forward, the Ni-ni-gou is more convenient to sell, and the design of Ni-ni-gou is more convenient to sell, so that it can retain the traditional connotation and popular recognition. Ni-ni-gou is more convenient to sell, more popular with the public, Ni-ni-gou from an unappreciated mud toys to the inclusion of rural revitalization system, while the diversified inheritance also promotes the development of Ni-ni-gou, Ni-ni-gou art into the primary and secondary school classroom, enhance the cultural confidence of students, expand the local culture and tourism integration construction, and promote the development of the local economy.

In short, the invented under the artwork and social process dimensions are very necessary to improve the popularity of the Ni-ni-gou and drive the development of local traditional culture, but in the traditional invention is not recognized by the public still need to change, so the author based on the research, proposed a new design.

#### Innovative Design of Ni-ni-gou in the Context of Rural Revitalization

The new design of Ni-ni-gou is very necessary. With the continuous development of socialism, the government and the people began to pay more and more attention to the development of non-heritage culture, and traditional folk handicrafts began to receive more and more attention. As a traditional folk art, the development of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou has also been greatly affected, but its survival is still fragile. Therefore, this paper focuses on the development situation of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou and the design strategy of innovative development, so as to make the synergistic development of regional cultural resources and rural industries, and then lead to the overall revitalization of Huaiyang region. In order to adapt to the aesthetic needs of modern people, the author chooses the most popular IP image design. However, in terms of



design, it can be considered to be drawn into a cute cartoonized shape as the basis, incorporating traditional images, and extracting and reconstructing the patterns with cultural connotations. Through the design positioning of Ni-ni-gou, it is concluded that Ni-ni-gou is more popular with young groups, we need to pay attention to this point, and the design direction should be biased towards youthfulness. The new design of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou follows its traditional cultural connotation, and through the combination of cartoonization and traditional dragon styling, it innovates a new image that fuses fashion and tradition. Only by being loved and recognized by the public can traditional folk art be inherited and developed, and rural revitalization can be helped through traditional folk handicrafts.

### 5.2 Research Discussion

At present, the total amount of research on the invented Ni-ni-gou is less, but in a state of growth, more and more research on the Ni-ni-gou tourism cultural and creative products, the research on the innovative design of the Ni-ni-gou itself is really less, the research direction on the traditional invented in the context of rural revitalization, the history of the development of the Ni-ni-gou of Huaiyang, the artistic value of the cultural connotation of the Ni-ni-gou has been in the changes and innovations in the work of art and the social process of the richer Research.

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is China's valuable intangible cultural heritage, its unique meaning is a reaction to the ancient people pray for a better life, with the progress of reform and opening up and emancipation of the mind as well as the evolution of social and cultural, Ni-ni-gou has become a unique folk art in the Huaiyang area, more in the form of folk toys, coupled with the advancement of industrialization, the Ni-ni-gou's survival has gradually become a special phenomenon of the Huaiyang area, the economy as well as the traditional artists continue to gradually disappear and decline. Traditional artists continue to disappear gradually decline, so the Ni-ni-gou continuous innovation to adapt to the trend of the times in order to promote the Ni-ni-gou cultural visibility to retain the valuable cultural heritage is the main issue of the moment. It is important to constantly innovate to preserve the original culture while reabsorbing new cultural trends.

This paper mainly focuses on the current development of Ni-ni-gou, develops innovative design products for Ni-ni-gou as a prototype, so as to make up for the shortcomings of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou under the reform of coping with the trend of the times, and to enrich the diversified existence of Ni-ni-gou in the development of the road, which not only enables Ni-ni-gou to be carried forward again with the help of the wind of the Internet era, but also provides a new way for local traditional artists to keep the special road of the non-heritage culture. This paper is bound to have shortcomings, in the subsequent practice on the road to continuous improvement.

### 5.3 Research Suggestion

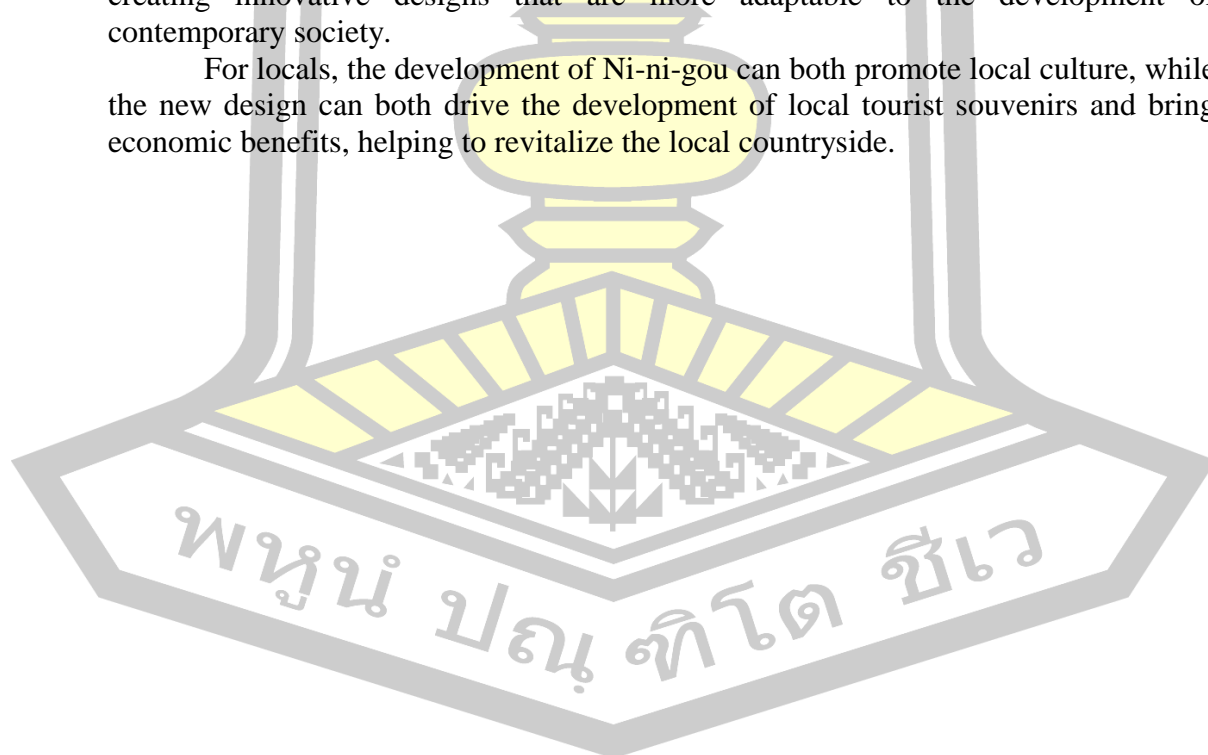
With the proposal of Chinese-style modernization, comprehensively promoting the construction of rural revitalization, the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, and the digital construction of national culture are the basic bottom line and important contents of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Among them, the construction of rural culture is its key promotion direction. To realize the construction and revitalization of Chinese-style modernized rural culture, we need to make choices in line with Chinese-style modernization, create a new cognitive environment and cultural experience of Chinese style, and take our own

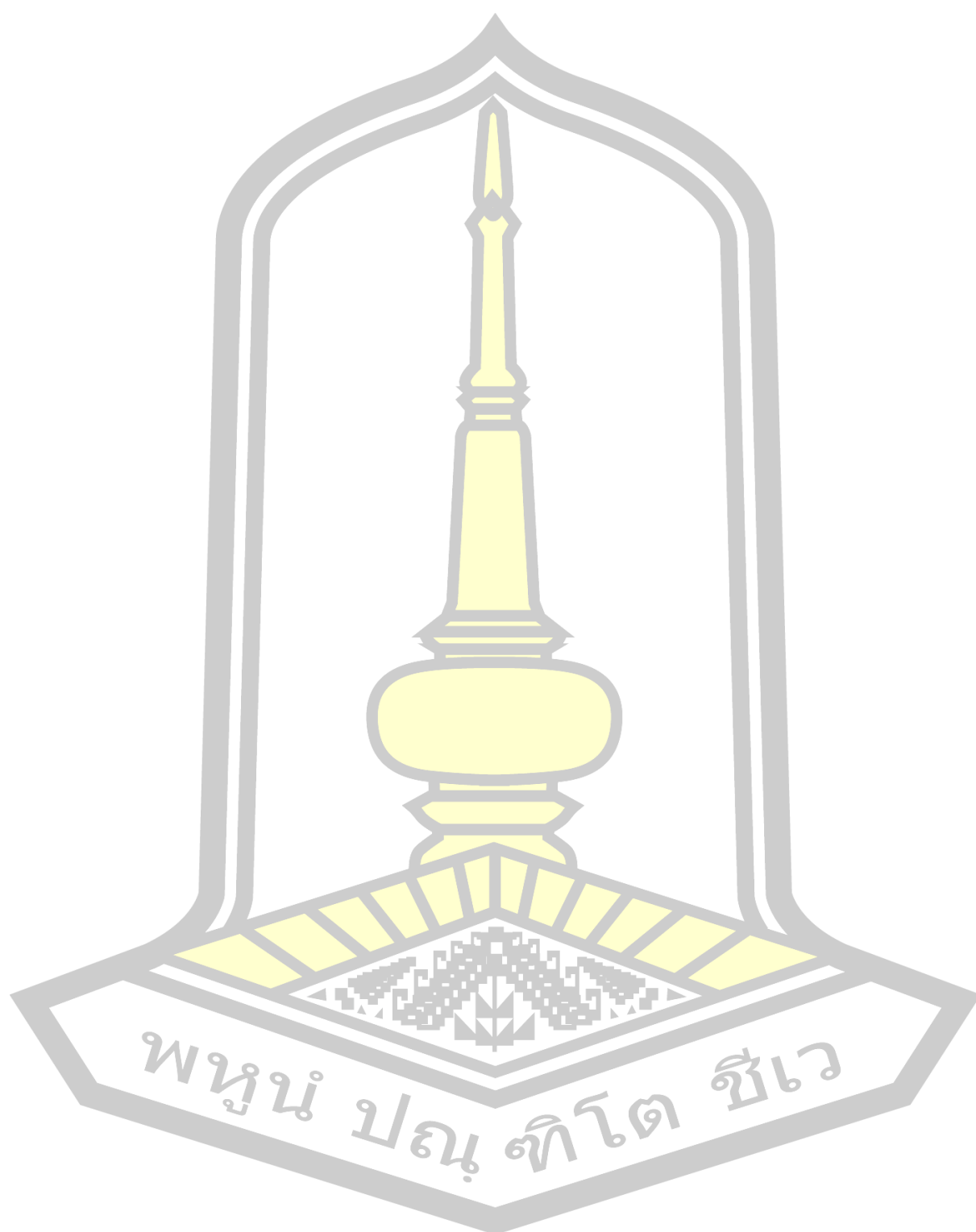
road of rural culture revitalization, while fully considering the characteristics and situation of our own country and drawing on the practical experience of others.

Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou has a long history, it is not only a traditional folk art, but also contains valuable cultural connotations, after the continuous inheritance and innovative design, as well as the Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou decorative ornamentation and color continue to dig deeper, try to transform the application of innovation in a variety of forms of design, to play a role in the promotion of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou is a traditional handmade product, in the practical application of more attempts to design and create techniques, so that the Ni-ni-gou can be "alive", better heritage and development. Rural revitalization gives new opportunities for the development of intangible cultural heritage, and there is still a broad space for the development and innovation of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou. I hope that through this research on the innovative design of Huaiyang Ni-ni-gou, I can contribute to the inheritance and innovation of China's intangible cultural heritage.

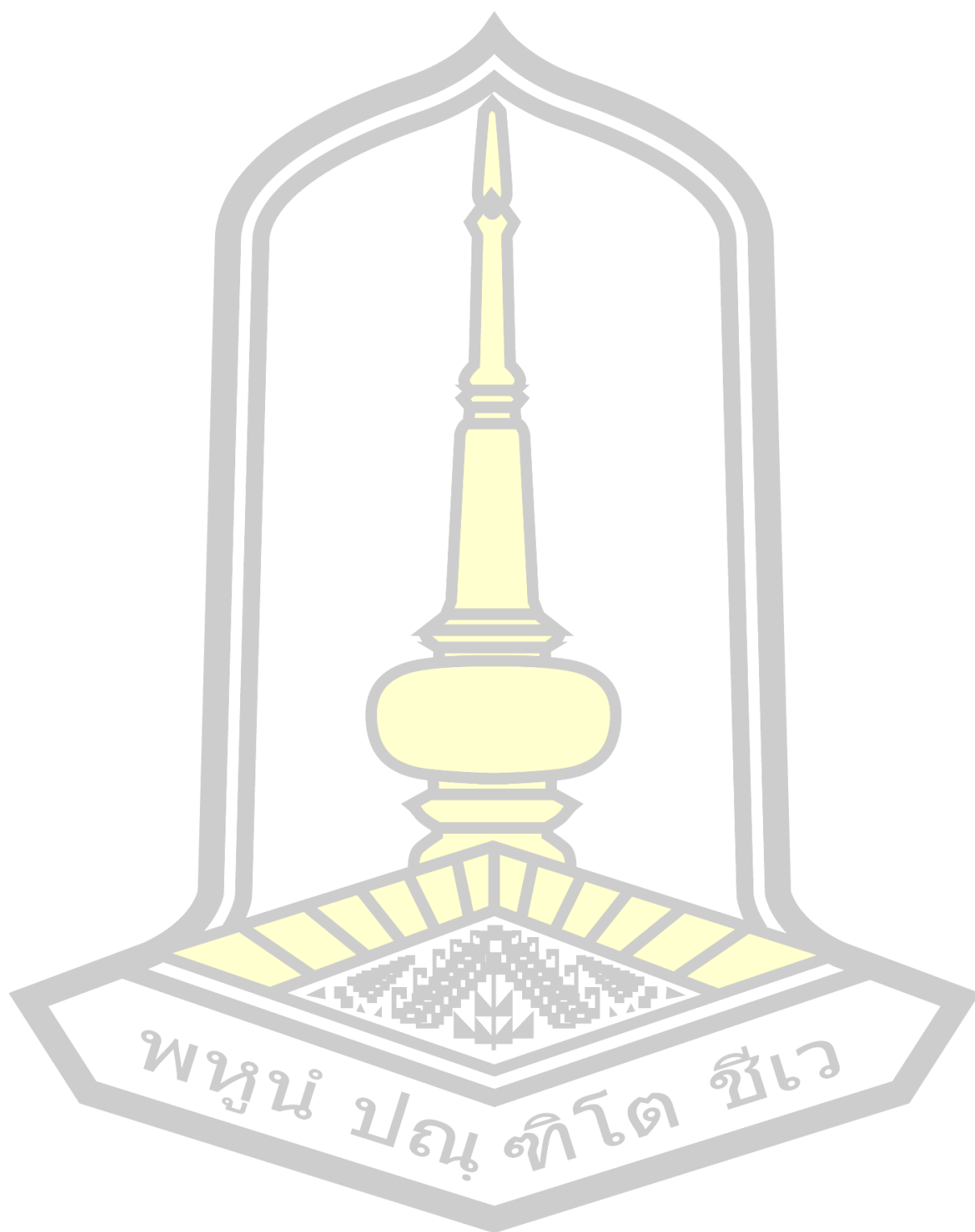
The inheritance and development of traditional folk art, the government should be in a positive posture to deal with the problems encountered, strengthen the dissemination of Ni-ni-gou, strengthen the support of the inheritors, to help the local folk art Ni-ni-gou to promote, and further promote the development of the local economy. Secondly, the government can carry out traditional culture promotion and education in colleges and universities. In this era, students are the subject of the inheritance of Chinese culture and the main force of innovation and creativity, strengthening traditional cultural education, enhancing cultural self-confidence, and creating innovative designs that are more adaptable to the development of contemporary society.

For locals, the development of Ni-ni-gou can both promote local culture, while the new design can both drive the development of local tourist souvenirs and bring economic benefits, helping to revitalize the local countryside.





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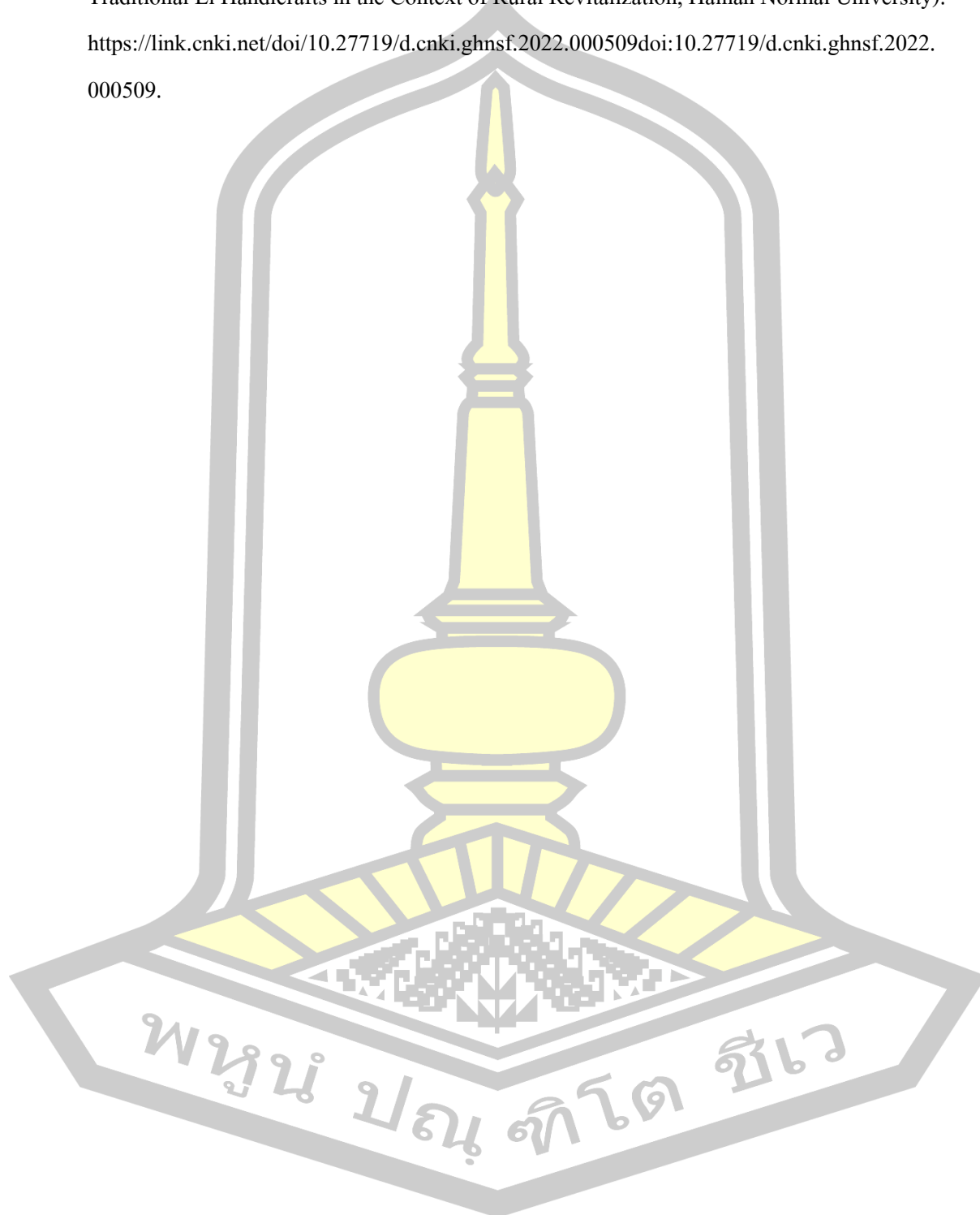
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## APPENDIX

### Field visits and inf

1. There are 3-5 people selling Ni-ni-gou in front of Taihao Mausoleum

① How is the sales of Ni-ni-gou? What time of year does it sell best?

② What is the age of the buyer?

2. Local people randomly interviewed 5 people

① Why choose to buy a Ni-ni-gou?

② Do you like the color and style of the Ni-ni-gou? Why? Do you think it needs to change?

③ How much do you know about the culture of Ni-ni-gou?

3. There is 1 non-genetic inheritor

The interview outline is as follows:

① Why and how do you learn to make Ni-ni-gou?

Answer: When I was in primary school, I loved to follow adults to the temple fair as much as children of the same age, and the pocket money given by the family basically changed the Ni-ni-gou at the temple meeting. By the time I was in junior high, my collection of Ni-ni-gou could fill several boxes. Because of the love of Ni-ni-gou, usually when I have time, I will go to the home of the old artists to see them do Ni-ni-gou, familiar with the pinch, plastic, engraving, dyeing, painting and other processes, the village people often laugh at me with mud and color home, I put their own works filled with windowsill.

② What is your inheritance concept and inheritance content for Mudi dog?

Answer: "Originality guard, ancient art new life." I took the Ni-ni-gou as the object of research and creation. After working outside for several years since 2000, I returned to my hometown of Huaiyang and conducted a serious field investigation on the living situation of the local Ni-ni-gou. Mudi dog, after several years of history, continues the life spirit of Chinese art, contains the mythological relics of Fuxi and Nuwa, and carries the totem mark of ancient Oriental civilization. These priceless treasures need us to protect and inherit.

③ What is the current status of Ni-ni-gou skill inheritance?

Answer: Today's young people are reluctant to learn Ni-ni-gou, first of all because they feel that the income of Ni-ni-gou is low, and they can not get rich by Ni-ni-gou, and most of them are still continuing to do it, and most of them are old people who really love Ni-ni-gou. The Ni-ni-gou heritage urgently needs young people to join.

④ What do you think is the biggest obstacle to the development of Ni-ni-gou at present?

A: I think the first is the decline of the heritage, the team is not yet complete, and the lack of brand awareness.

⑤ Does the local government have a policy tilt for the development of Ni-ni-gou?

A: Compared with the intangible cultural heritage in other provinces, the city's work and policy inclinations are far from enough. I hope that in the future, with our joint efforts, we can obtain more and more policy support.

⑥ Do you think the current Mudi dog IP image design is feasible?

A: I am very feasible, because the current Ni-ni-gou has not landed IP image, 1P image for the development of Ni-ni-gou will have a very huge role in promoting, I

also look forward to working with the majority of designers to jointly create in line with the Ni-ni-gou's own temperament IP image.

⑦ What are your current innovative explorations of Ni-ni-gou?

A: The innovation and exploration are mainly in two aspects: First, the combination of pottery firing technology and the traditional skills of Ni-ni-gou, so that Ni-ni-gou have the "beauty of porcelain". The second is to replace the traditional raw material yellow clay, hollowing treatment, making it more robust and lightweight.



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