



LONGZHOU ZHUANG BROCADE: SYMBOL, FUNCTION AND INHERITANCE

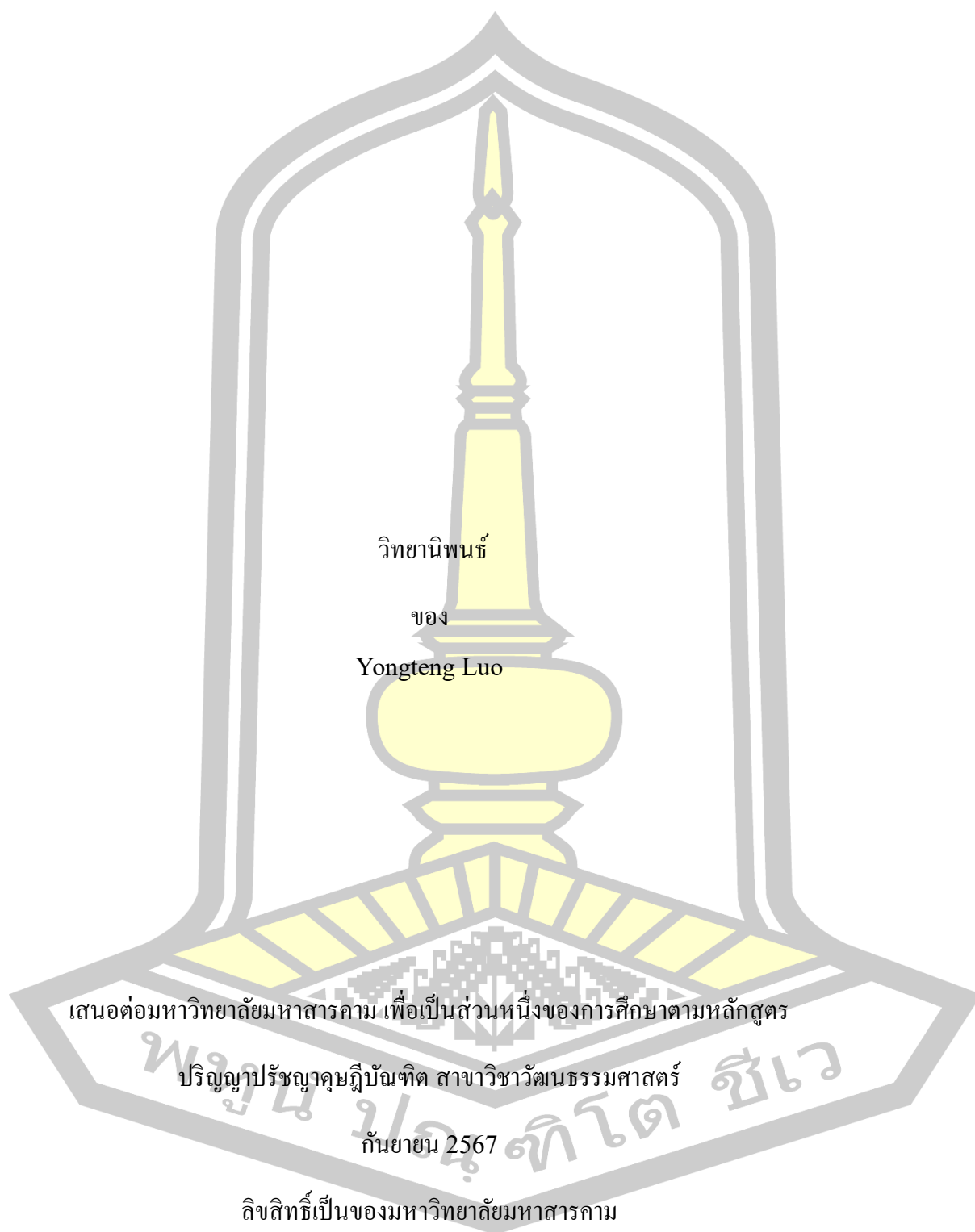
Yongteng Luo

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Science

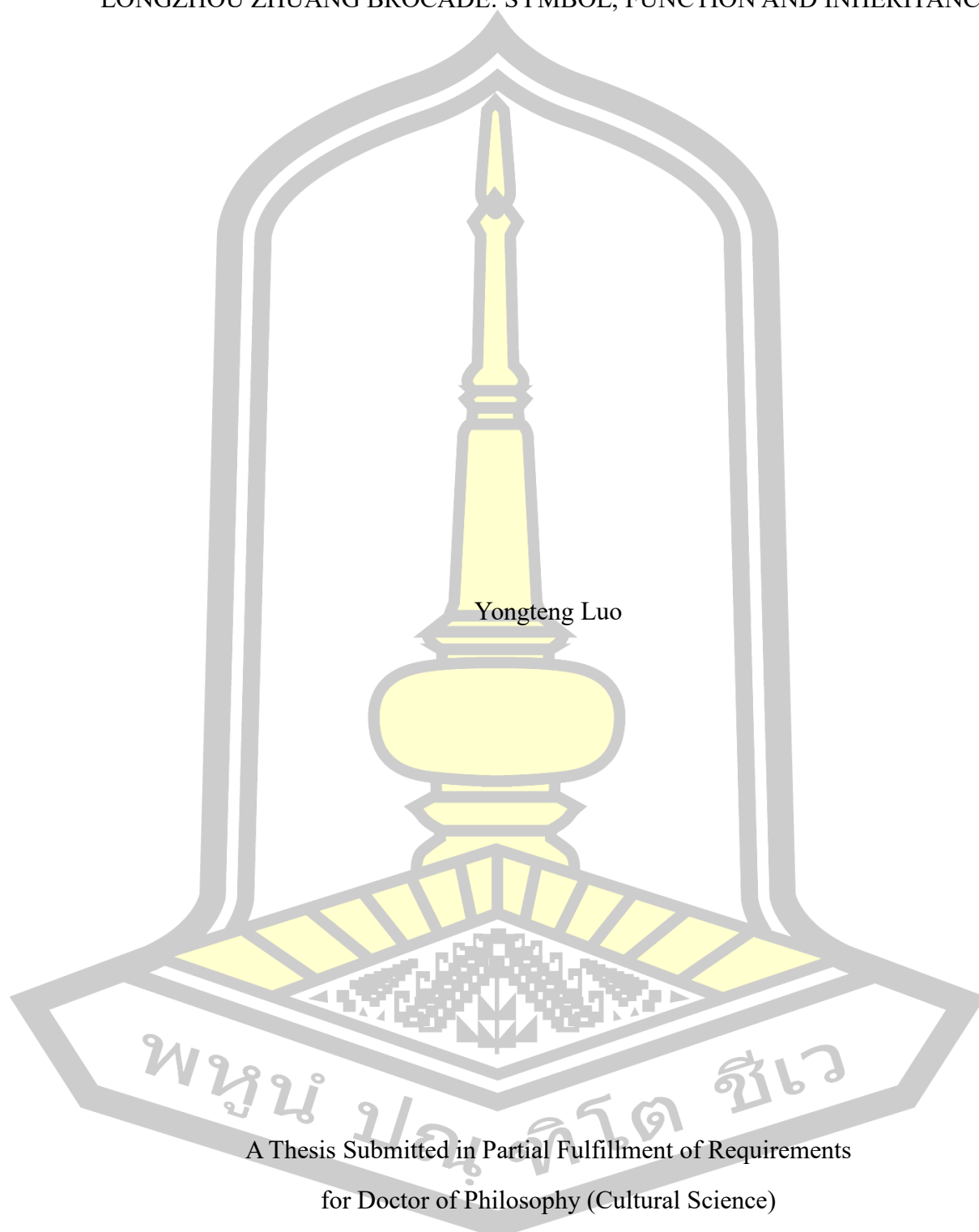
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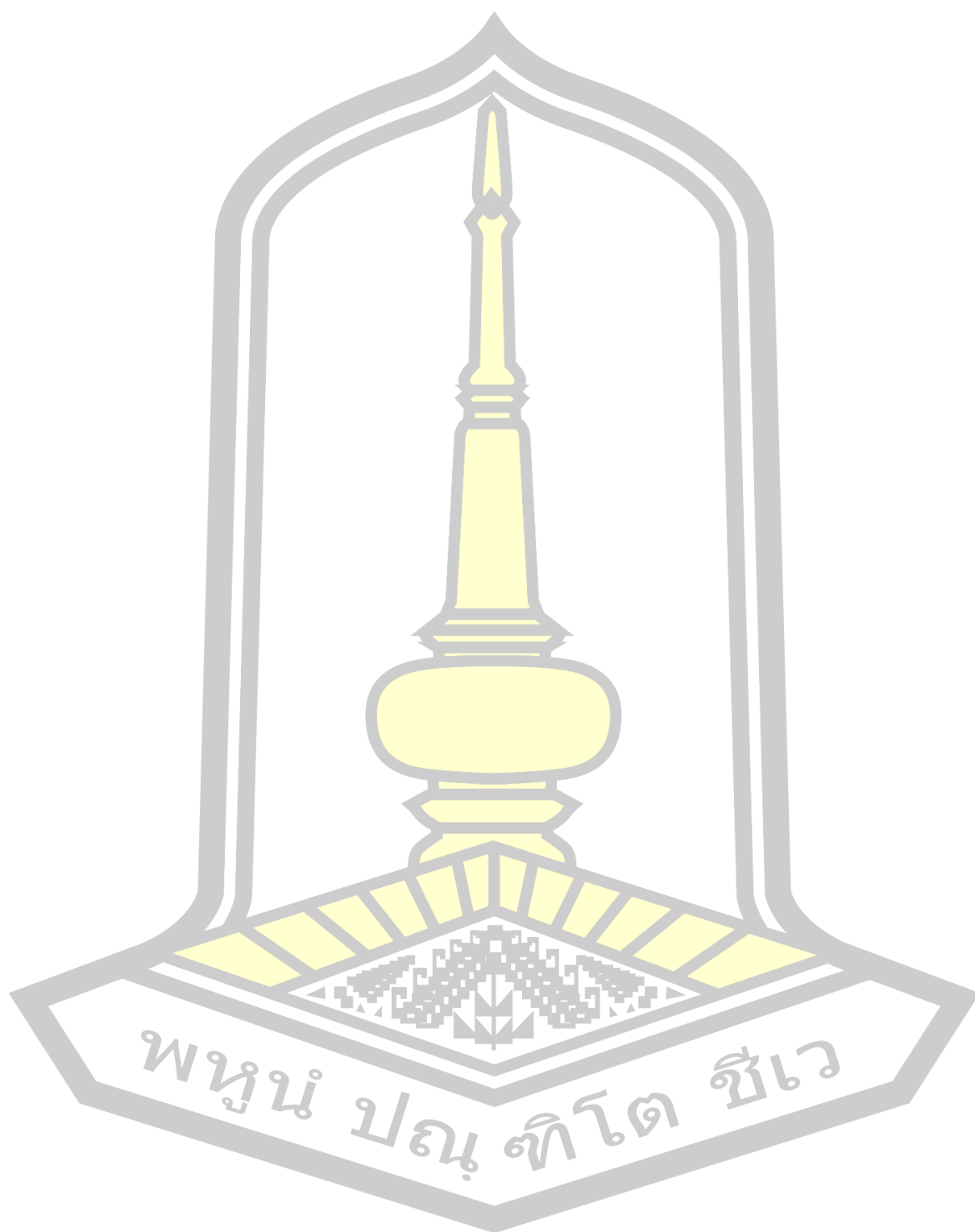


Yongteng Luo

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for Doctor of Philosophy (Cultural Science)

September 2024

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis,
submitted by Mr. Yongteng Luo , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy Cultural Science at Mahasarakham University

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TITLE	LONGZHOU ZHUANG BROCADE: SYMBOL, FUNCTION AND INHERITANCE		
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ABSTRACT

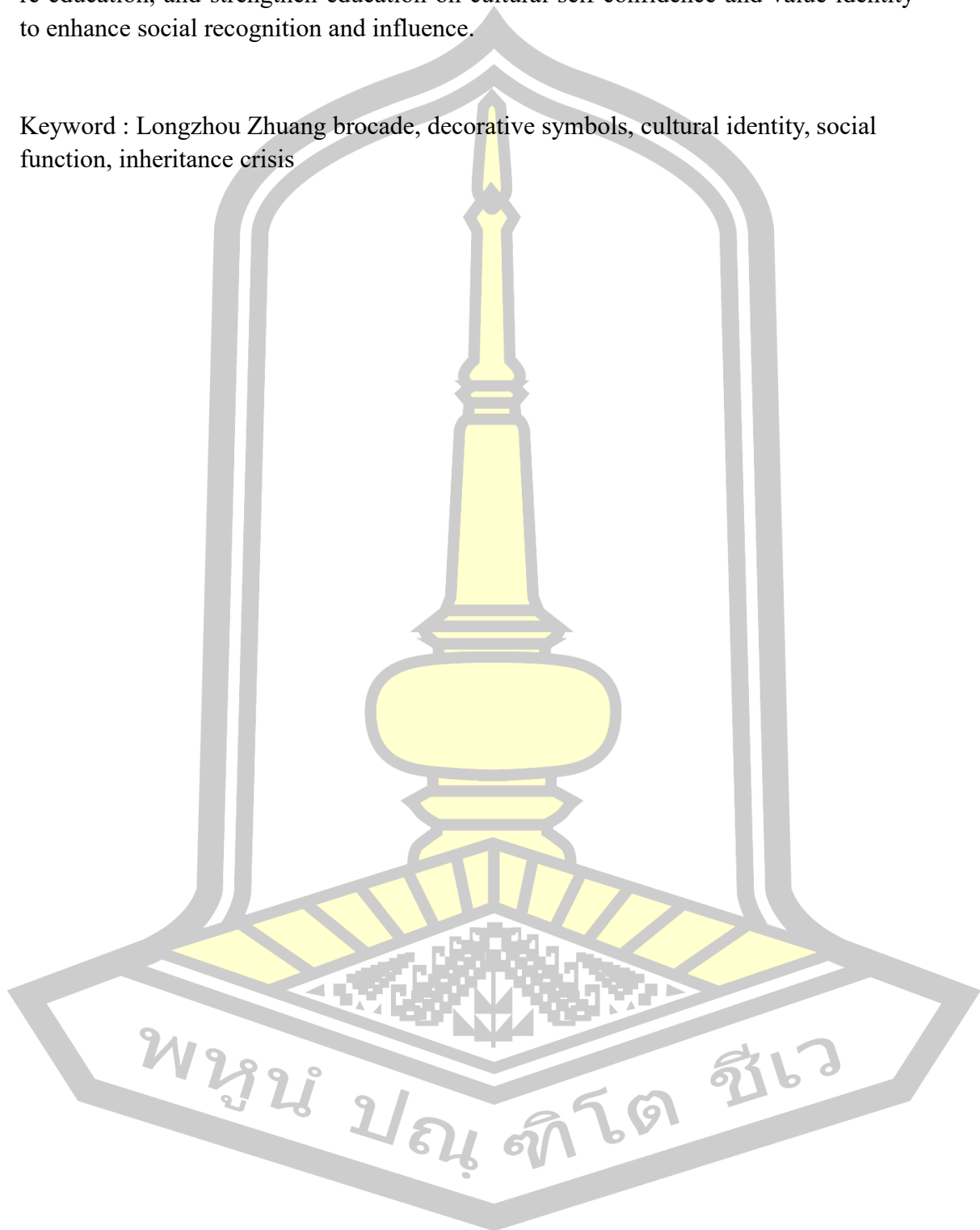
The research objectives of this study are, 1) To study the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.2) To study the symbols and social functions of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.3) To study the inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

This study adopts qualitative research method. Six key informants, 12 temporary informants and 20 general informants were selected for this study, and information was collected and organised through field research, in-depth interviews and participant observation. The research results were obtained through data analysis and research. The results of the study are as follows:

The main conclusions of this study are: 1) There are six historical stages of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving, originating before 202 B.C.E., improving skills from 202 B.C.E. to 220 A.D., and reaching its peak from 1369 A.D. to 1912 A.D.. The market boomed from 1912 to 1949 A.D., and has declined and then gradually revived from 1949 A.D. to the present.2) The Longzhou Zhuang brocade decorative symbols are geometric, botanical, animal and Chinese characters, and the colours of the brocade are a strong manifestation of the emotions, and they contain the cultures of the Zhuang people in Longzhou.The Longzhou Zhuang brocade has multiple social functions, and it is an important carrier of national culture, identity, and education and wisdom. It is used as a precious gift in life rituals to deepen emotional ties and maintain community harmony.3) The Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills are facing the crisis of the reduction of weavers, the aging of skill masters, and the low social recognition in the face of the impact of modernisation and the influence of foreign cultures. In order to cope with the challenges, strategies are

proposed to establish related professions, implement modern apprenticeship and skills re-education, and strengthen education on cultural self-confidence and value identity to enhance social recognition and influence.

Keyword : Longzhou Zhuang brocade, decorative symbols, cultural identity, social function, inheritance crisis



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Yongteng Luo

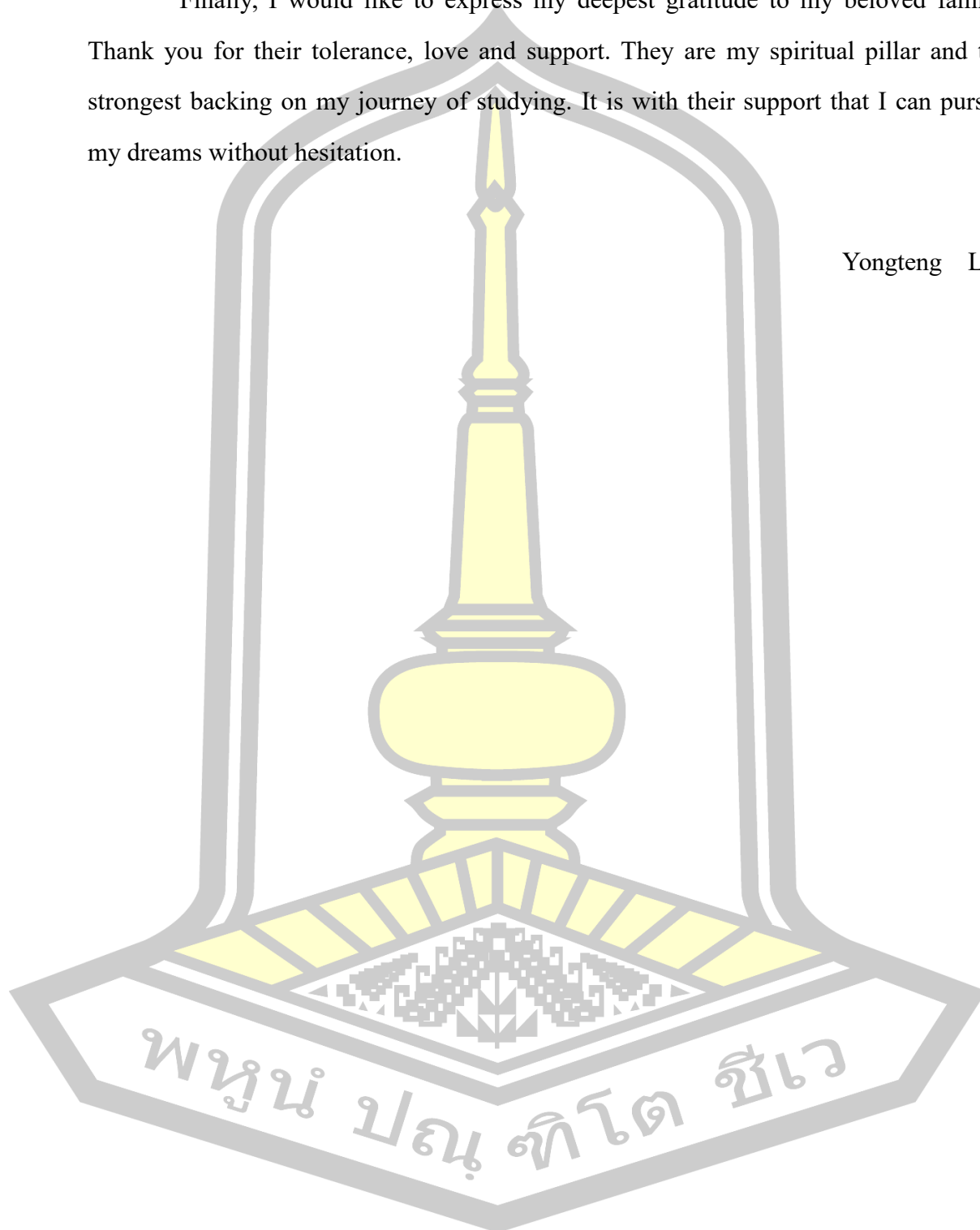
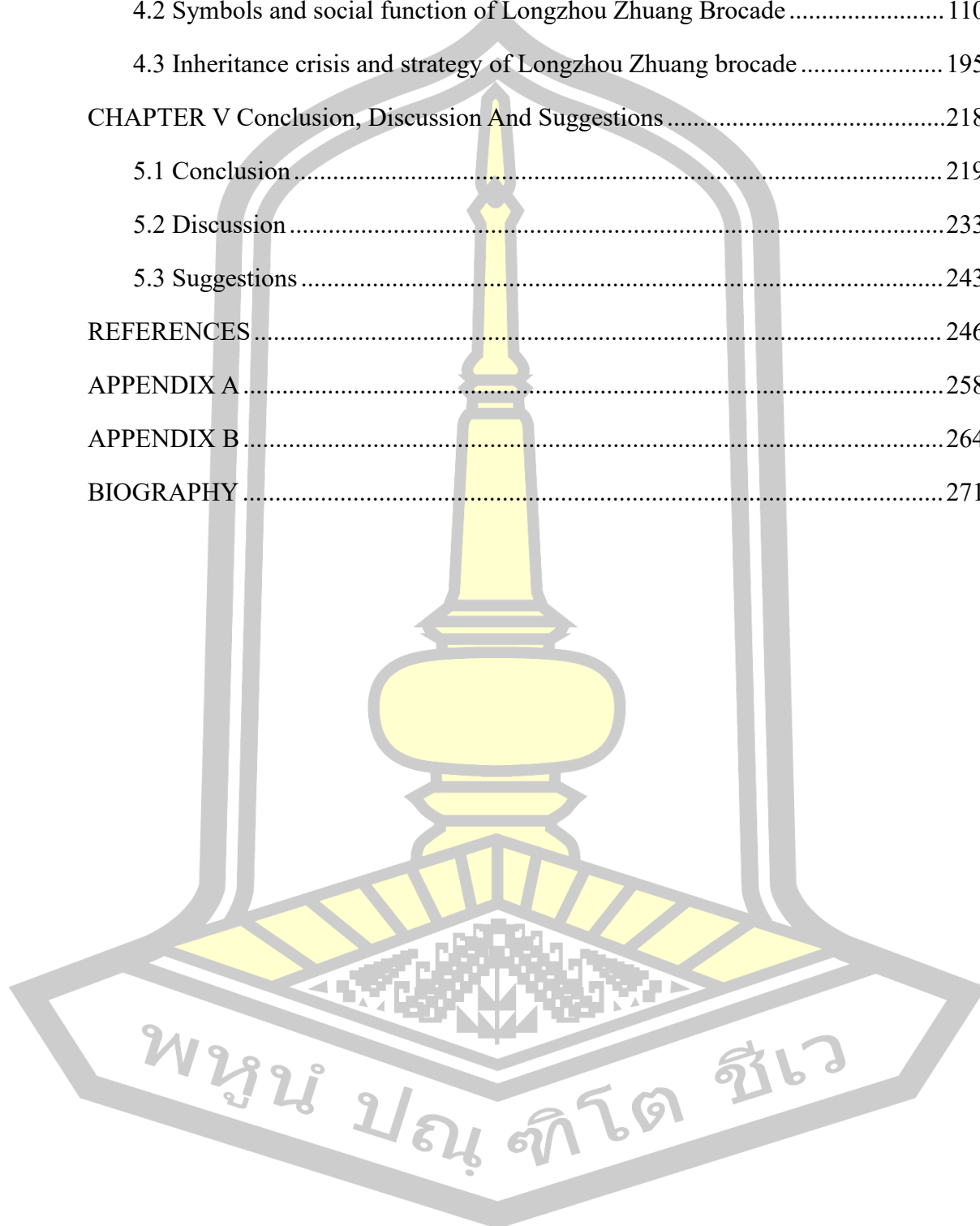


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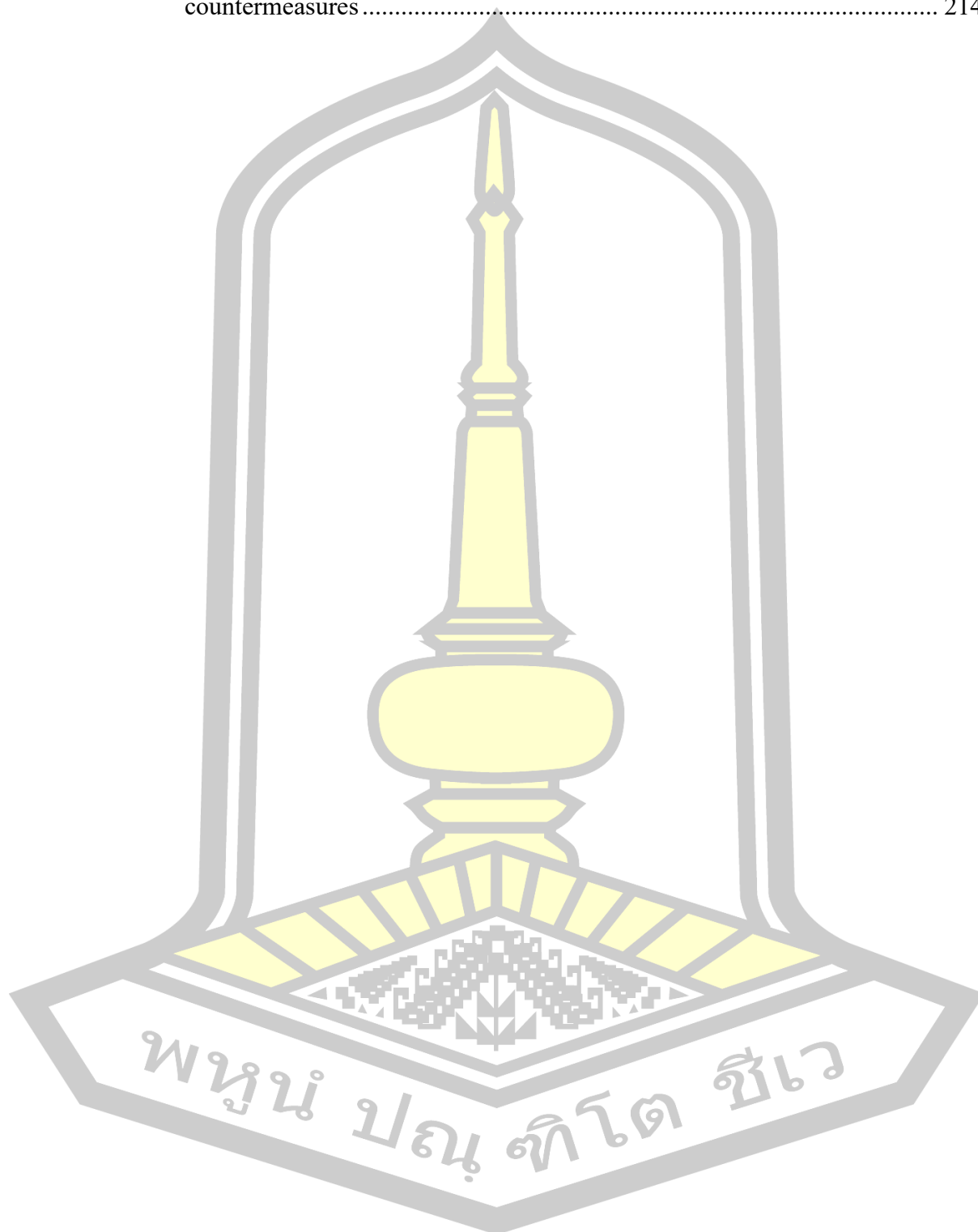
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter focuses on outlining a comprehensive research framework on Longzhou Zhuangjin, specifically covering the research context, objectives, issues, significance, definition of terms and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1.2.1 To study the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
- 1.2.2 To study the symbols and social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
- 1.2.3 To study the inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

1.3 Research Questions

- 1.3.1 What is the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?
- 1.3.2 What are the symbols and social functions of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?
- 1.3.3 How to deal with the inheritance crisis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?

1.4 Importance of Research

1.5 Definition of Terms

- 1.5.1 Longzhou Zhuang Brocade
- 1.5.2 Decorative Symbols
- 1.5.3 Social Function
- 1.5.4 Inheritance Crisis

1.6 Conceptual Framework

1.1 Background of the Study

Longzhou, located in the southwestern part of China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is a county under the jurisdiction of Chongzuo City, Guangxi. Since ancient times, it has been the treasure land where the Zhuang people live. In this land of spirit and beauty, the Zhuang children with hard-working hands and infinite wisdom, created a colorful, unique and charming traditional handicrafts - Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

Longzhou Zhuang brocade has a long history, which can be traced back to hundreds of years ago. As an important part of Zhuang culture, it carries rich historical and cultural connotations, and is a valuable treasure handed down from generation to generation by the Zhuang people. This kind of brocade is made of natural fibers such as cotton and silk as raw materials, processed by complicated crafts such as dyeing and rinsing, and then hand-woven by dexterous weavers on ancient looms. Each piece of work condenses the weavers' blood and sweat, and is a concrete embodiment of their aspiration and pursuit of a better life.

Zhuang brocade has become an important symbol reflecting the culture of the Zhuang people because of its unique weaving technique, color application, shape design and pattern content. In 2006 A.D., Zhuang brocade was inscribed on the first national intangible cultural heritage list of the People's Republic of China, numbered VII-20, and became a national intangible cultural heritage. Zhuang brocade is a craft textile created by the Zhuang people in their long-term production labor and social life, through which the relationship between Zhuang people, nature, society and the country can be studied.

"The Zhuang people select patterns for their Zhuang brocades from visible things in life and symbols of auspiciousness and happiness, such as dragons, phoenixes, the sun, the moon, stars, chickens, birds, flowers, and figures from various myths and legends. They believe that by using these patterned Zhuang brocades, which are then made into various daily necessities, they can receive the blessings of the gods, be safe from disasters, enjoy health and happiness, and prolong their lifespan." (Chen, 2008). In the traditional conception of the Zhuang, a good woman should, first and foremost, be skillful in weaving. Many Zhuang women start learning Zhuang brocade weaving at the age of eight or nine. This has become a standard for the Zhuang people to measure whether a woman is industrious and virtuous, and directly affects their social status and the quality of marriage. Zhuang girls are diligent Zhuang brocade weaving, their inner world, and the pursuit of a better life, designed into a variety of decorative patterns, woven in the Zhuang brocade, by way of displaying their Zhuang brocade weaving techniques, eager to be recognized by others and the community. Through the decorative patterns of Zhuang brocade, one can understand the moral concepts, ethical concepts, concepts of right and wrong, values of life and aesthetic interests of the Zhuang people.

For the Zhuang ethnic group, Zhuang brocade has the function of ethnic identity and is the window for the Zhuang to show their culture to the outside world. Lu (2017) said, "The greatest characteristics of the ethnic group are reflected in the unique cultural qualities, i.e., unique religion, language and customs, coupled with common ancestral memories. Regardless of the definition, we can see that their own unique cultural traits are the basis for the existence of the ethnic group, and this culture is closely linked to their ancestral memories, forming a strong sense of ethnic awareness

and ethnic identity." In the long-term labour practice of Guangxi people of all ethnic groups, Zhuang brocade produces rich and wonderful patterns, strongly reflecting their love and respect for life, nature and national culture, permeated with the optimistic spirit of national culture, uniting people's beautiful aspirations, expressing sincere emotions, and becoming a "living fossil" carrying the memory of national culture. When the Zhuang people weave Zhuang brocade, the symbols on the brocade are designed as worshiped animals and plants, gods and goddesses, runes and other patterns, which are believed by the Zhuang people to be able to communicate with their ancestors or gods, and to obtain the power and blessing given by their ancestors or gods and goddesses. Since these symbols are the common beliefs of the Zhuang people, the community generally recognises the symbols on the Zhuang brocade, and when people use these symbols with the characteristics of the Zhuang culture on specific occasions, it is easy to arouse the recognition of other Zhuang people. When displaying their own culture to the outside world, the Zhuang people will show various kinds of Zhuang brocade handicrafts so that people outside their own community can quickly understand and recognise their own culture, thus gaining a great sense of satisfaction and pride, which in turn is conducive to the people of their own community to understand their own culture, respect their own culture, affirm their own culture, and consciously pass it down, carry it forward, and practice it on this basis.

For the country, China is a big family composed of fifty-six nationalities, and the excellent traditional culture of the nationalities is that of the country. Zhuang brocade, as a representative of the excellent traditional culture of the Zhuang people and also a national intangible cultural heritage of China, constitutes a big family of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation together with the excellent traditional culture of other nationalities. China can display Zhuang brocade on the international stage to let people around the world understand Chinese culture. The traditional culture of nationalities can transcend the boundaries of regions, classes, parties, races and time, and with culture as a bond and thoughts as a bridge, it generates a huge but invisible cultural integration power to unite all nationalities of the country tightly.

However, the research, inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade in Guangxi have encountered difficulties. It is mainly manifested in three aspects: firstly, there are few academic research results, which do not match the status of "four famous brocades in China"; secondly, many people only pay attention to the weaving skills and appearance of the Zhuang brocade, and few people really understand its symbolic significance, and even fewer people can interpret its symbolic content in depth from the perspectives of the nature, society and people of the Zhuang people; thirdly, the weavers' income is low, and fewer and fewer weavers are making Zhuang brocades. Fewer and fewer weavers are making Zhuang brocade.

Lu Qiong, a researcher of Zhuang brocade in China, mentioned in her doctoral thesis "Research on Zhuang Brocade Decoration" that Zhuang brocade is the only ethnic brocade among the "Four Famous Brocades", and it is the intangible cultural heritage of national folk crafts. The Zhuang brocade decoration has become an important cultural symbol reflecting the history, culture and customs of the Zhuang people because of its unique weaving technology, colour application, shape design and pattern content. Therefore, the study of Zhuang brocade decoration can not only deepen the study of minority brocade, but also promote the development of Zhuang studies. The contribution of Zhuang brocade research to these two fields is inconsistent with its position. In the field of brocade research, not only the research of other three famous brocades is deeper than that of Zhuang brocade, but also the research of some minority brocades such as Tujia brocade and Lijin brocade is deeper than it. In the research of Zhuang studies, the research of Zhuang brocade lags far behind the research of bronze drums, mountain songs, literature and myths, population studies, architectural studies and so on. This calls for strengthening the study of Zhuang brocade ornamentation, strengthening the first position of Zhuang brocade in minority brocade and its due position in Zhuang studies as a cultural symbol of Zhuang people.(Fan,2021)

Lu Qiong, in the appendix of her doctoral thesis "Research on Zhuang brocade decoration", has an interview with Tan Xiangguang, the head weaver of Zhuang brocade in Guangxi, and her apprentice Huang Aiqun, which was interviewed in 2013, in which the two representative local weavers talked about the low income of weaving Zhuang brocade, the boring work, and the small number of people who are willing to become weavers, and Huang Aiqun mentioned that there are very few people who are interested in Zhuang brocade at the present time. This shows that there were very few weavers who were willing to weave brocade at that time. Dr Lu Qiong also interviewed the weavers in the brocade factory, and when asked, "Do you understand the meaning of that pattern? I see that there are birds and fish in it. Why do you put birds and fish together? When asked these questions, the weaver said that she did not understand, and that she was simply weaving according to the owner's intention. This shows that the weaver does not understand the culture behind the Zhuang brocade symbols and the connection between these Zhuang brocade cultures and the society, nature, and people of the Zhuang people.(Lu,2017)

Another researcher of brocade weaving in Guangxi Zhuang, Nong Wenjun, in her master's thesis, "Research on Zhuang Brocade Culture in Jingxi under the Perspective of Symbolic Anthropology," has a transcript of an interview, which she recorded when she interviewed two famous folk weavers, He Xiuyu and Zhou Kunying. The two weavers said, "It's been a long time since anyone came to look for the Zhuang brocade, so we're not making it anymore, and my brocade loom was thrown at home and broke down, and two years ago, the Cultural Centre brought a team to visit, and asked me if I wanted to sell my brocade loom, and I thought about it,

and sold it, and sold it for almost six or seven hundred." At the mention of this stall, He Xiuyu also looks a little depressed: "I'm old, tapestry loom weaving half of the Zhuang brocade or the year before last, tapestry loom is also old with a very dry, I'm old, not much strength to go to the tapestry again." From the words "no one has come to look for brocade for a long time", "the loom has been sold", "I have no strength to weave when I am old", it is easy to see that brocade, as a traditional handicraft, has gradually lost its customers. Customers, with the loss of customers, the market also gradually withered, it is difficult for weavers to have income again, no income, there will be no one to become a weaver, this is a vicious circle.

This study borrows the theory of cultural science to conduct research, collect Guangxi Zhuang brocades through fieldwork, classify them, interpret the cultural connotations referred to by the symbols, study the relationship between the emergence and development of the Zhuang brocade culture and the natural geographic environment in which the Zhuang people live, and study the functions that Zhuang brocades play in the social and cultural life of the Zhuang people, which is introduced into the campus where I work, and is taught to the students by using the diversified platforms of the school. This can help more people read about Zhuang brocade culture and draw more attention to it. In addition to this, researchers can also conduct field research to gain an in-depth understanding of the difficulties encountered in the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade skills in the context of modern China, analyse the reasons for this, and study countermeasures to deal with these difficulties from different aspects, in order to provide references and lessons for the inheritance and preservation of Zhuang brocade culture.

1.2 Research Objectives

- 1.2.1 To study the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
- 1.2.2 To study the symbols and social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
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1.3 Research Questions

- 1.3.1 What is the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?
- 1.3.2 What are the symbols and social functions of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?
- 1.3.3 How to deal with the inheritance crisis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade?

1.4 Importance of Research

The exploration of the historical background of Longzhou Ethnic Textiles holds immense importance for comprehending and preserving the cultural heritage of the Ethnic group. By delving into the history of these textiles, we gain insight into the

origins, progression, and transformations of the Ethnic culture across various historical epochs, bolstering the cultural identity and pride within the Ethnic community. Moreover, as a significant embodiment of their culture, historical investigations into Longzhou Ethnic Textiles unveil the lifestyle, aesthetic preferences, and values cherished by the Ethnic people, offering invaluable historical insights and cultural recollections for future generations. Academically speaking, such research has propelled advancements in the fields of history, cultural studies, and anthropology. Through comparative analyses spanning different time periods, the developmental trajectory and evolutionary patterns of Ethnic Textiles become more apparent. Furthermore, these findings serve as a foundation for the advancement of local cultural tourism, fostering the growth and prosperity of the tourism sector.

Examining the symbolic significance and societal roles of Longzhou Ethnic Textiles is beneficial for cultural dissection and preservation. The designs and hues employed in these textiles are laden with deep symbolism. By scrutinizing the cultural undertones of these symbols, we can attain a profound understanding of the Ethnic people's worldview, value systems, and aesthetic sensibilities, thereby aiding in the preservation and transmission of their culture. Additionally, as a practical aspect of daily life, Ethnic textiles serve multiple societal functions, including educational imparting, cultural identification, and ceremonial practices. Studying these functions reveals the tangible impact and influence of Ethnic textiles within their society, further reinforcing cultural identity. These research outcomes can also be utilized in modern design and cultural tourism, elevating the cultural value of commodities and drawing tourists to experience the richness of the culture.

The investigation of inheritance challenges and strategies pertaining to Longzhou Ethnic Textiles is crucial for the preservation and continuation of intangible cultural heritage. The artisanal skills associated with these textiles are facing an inheritance crisis. By studying the current state of inheritance and the obstacles it faces, we can formulate scientific and practical conservation strategies to ensure that this traditional craftsmanship is not forgotten or lost. In response to issues such as the dwindling number of weavers and the aging of skilled inheritors, targeted solutions like establishing relevant educational programs and implementing modern apprenticeship models can be implemented. These measures aid in cultivating a new generation of skilled inheritors, ensuring the continuity and stability of the craft. Simultaneously, these research findings can drive innovation and upgrading within the Ethnic textile industry, facilitating market expansion and achieving a harmonious balance of economic and societal benefits. Additionally, this research provides valuable insights for governmental bodies to develop informed and effective support policies, promoting the healthy growth of the textile industry and exploring sustainable development avenues such as eco-friendly production methods and the integration of cultural tourism, ultimately leading to the long-term stability and progress of the industry.

1.5 Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

Longzhou Zhuang Brocade, originating from Longzhou County, Guangxi, China, is a traditional textile art form of the Zhuang people. It is characterized by vibrant colors, intricate patterns, and is made from natural materials such as cotton and silk. This brocade has a rich historical background, dating back hundreds of years, and is closely connected to the cultural identity of the Zhuang people. It is not only a textile but also a symbol of Zhuang society, spirituality, and cultural life. The weaving process is complex, involving skills such as dyeing, bleaching, and hand-weaving on traditional looms. Each piece of brocade demonstrates the exquisite craftsmanship of the weavers and the cultural values of the Zhuang people. Its patterns often depict elements of nature, mythology, and daily life, and are believed to bring blessings, protection, and prosperity to the wearer or owner.

1.5.2 Decorative Symbols

The symbols in Zhuang brocade are crucial for interpreting its cultural significance. These symbols include geometric shapes, plant patterns, animal images, and Chinese characters, each carrying specific meanings closely related to the worldviews, beliefs, and values of the Zhuang people. For example, V-shaped and zigzag patterns symbolize rivers or mountains, representing strength and resilience; animal patterns such as dragons and phoenixes are associated with mythology and are believed to bring protection and good luck. The use of colors is also symbolic, with red representing happiness and celebration, while black may symbolize stability and protection. These symbols are not only decorative but also a language that conveys the cultural heritage and beliefs of the Zhuang people.

1.5.3 Social Function

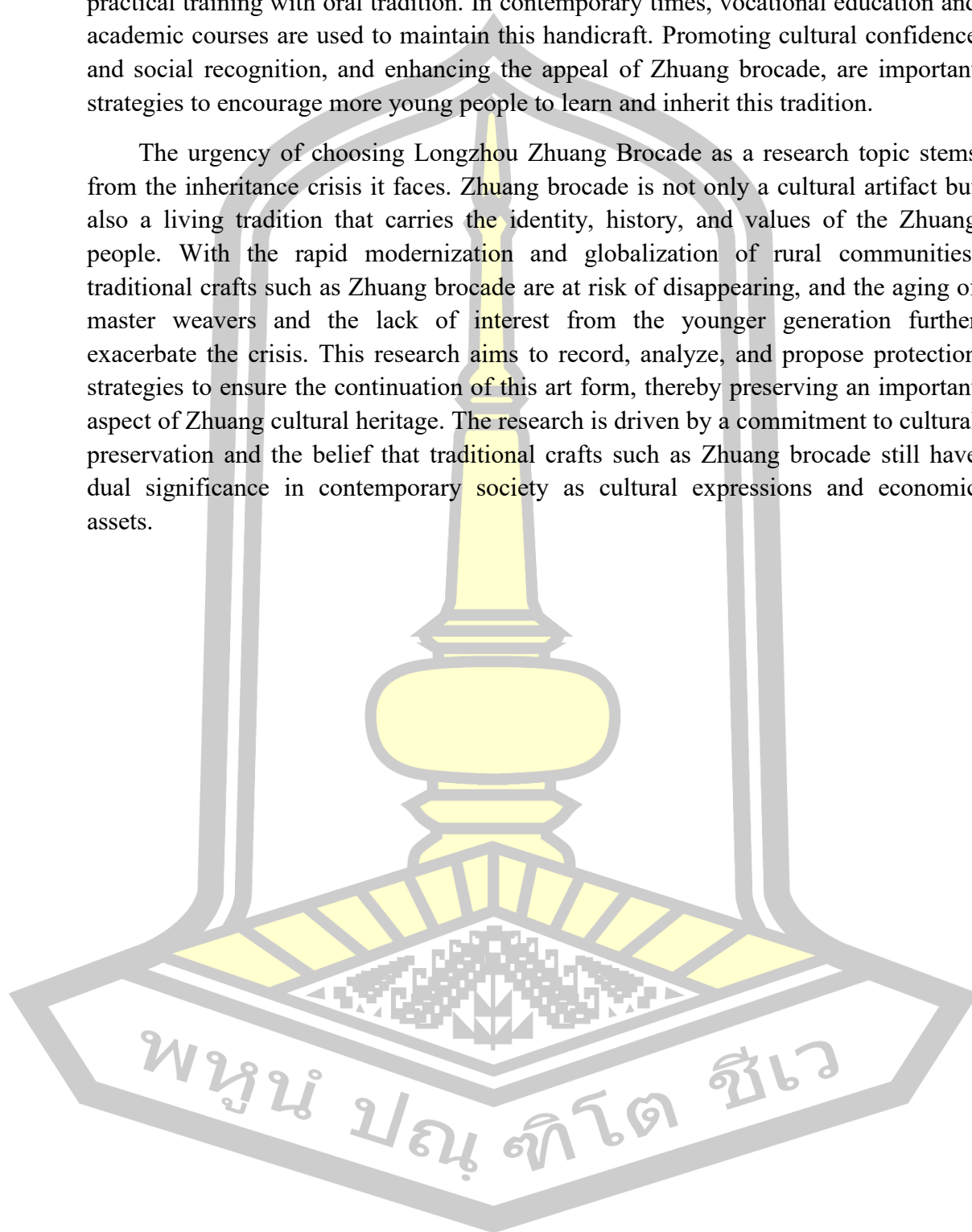
Zhuang brocade plays multiple social and cultural roles in the community. It is widely used in life ceremonies such as weddings, birth celebrations, and funerals, symbolizing blessings, inheritance, and respect for tradition. At the same time, brocade is also a carrier of cultural education, passing on traditions and values to the younger generation through patterns and symbols. Furthermore, as an identity marker, Zhuang brocade enhances the sense of community and belonging among the Zhuang people and has become a cultural symbol representing Zhuang history and external identity in the modern context.

1.5.4 Inheritance Crisis

The inheritance of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship is crucial for protecting this intangible cultural heritage, but it faces multiple challenges such as the impact of modernization, the aging of master weavers, and the declining interest of the younger

generation. Traditionally, skills were inherited through apprenticeship, combining practical training with oral tradition. In contemporary times, vocational education and academic courses are used to maintain this handicraft. Promoting cultural confidence and social recognition, and enhancing the appeal of Zhuang brocade, are important strategies to encourage more young people to learn and inherit this tradition.

The urgency of choosing Longzhou Zhuang Brocade as a research topic stems from the inheritance crisis it faces. Zhuang brocade is not only a cultural artifact but also a living tradition that carries the identity, history, and values of the Zhuang people. With the rapid modernization and globalization of rural communities, traditional crafts such as Zhuang brocade are at risk of disappearing, and the aging of master weavers and the lack of interest from the younger generation further exacerbate the crisis. This research aims to record, analyze, and propose protection strategies to ensure the continuation of this art form, thereby preserving an important aspect of Zhuang cultural heritage. The research is driven by a commitment to cultural preservation and the belief that traditional crafts such as Zhuang brocade still have dual significance in contemporary society as cultural expressions and economic assets.



1.6 Conceptual Framework

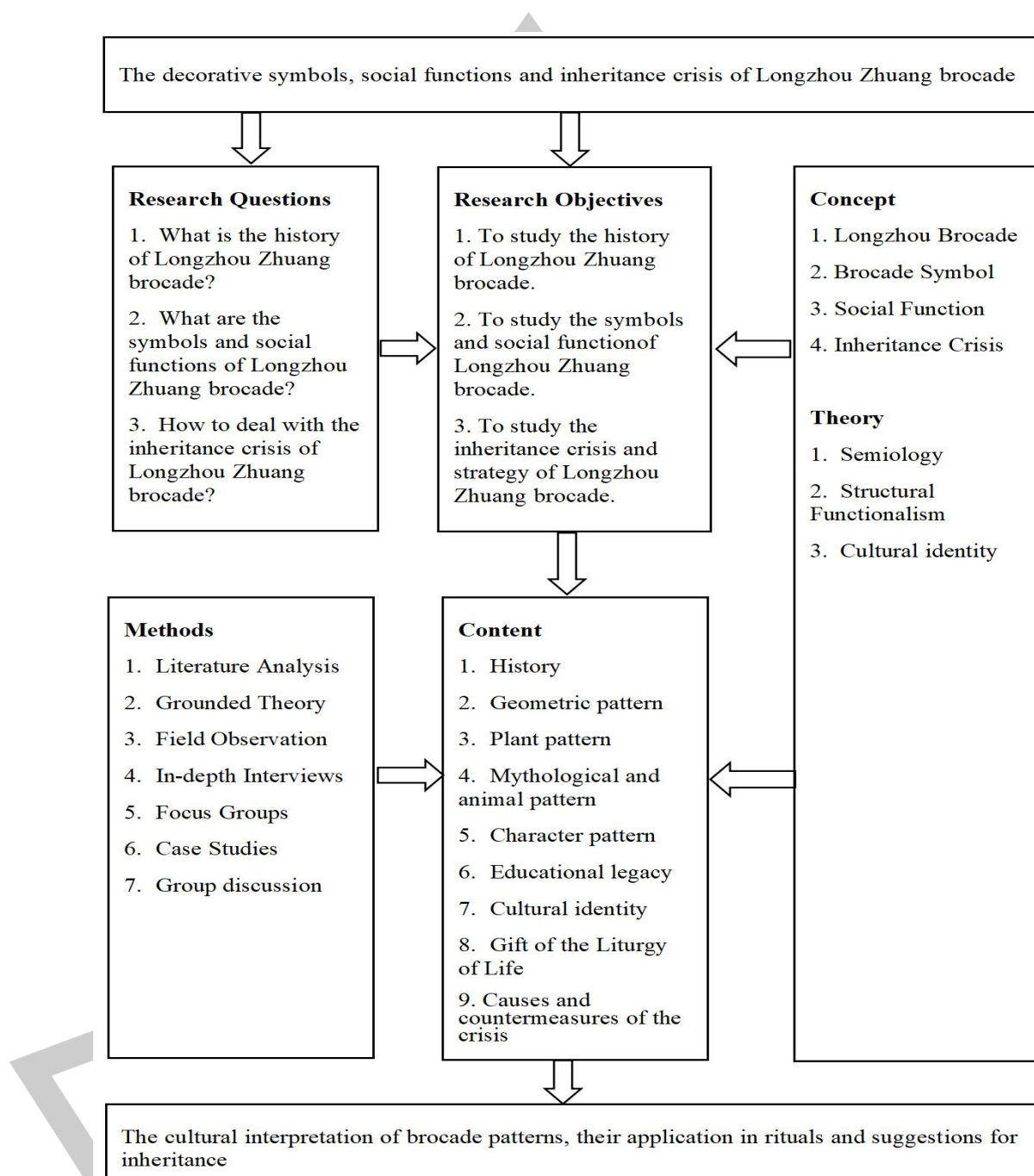


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

CHAPTER II

Literature Reviews

This study centers on the Zhuang brocade of Longzhou, Guangxi, China, so in this part of the literature review, a brief overview of Guangxi and Longzhou, the origins and development of the Zhuang people, the society and culture of the Zhuang people, knowledge about the Zhuang brocade, and published collections of essays and papers on the Zhuang brocade will be presented.

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2.1 Origin and Development of the Zhuang

The Zhuang, also known as Bouxcuengh (Zhuangwen) and often referred to in the past as the boy (Zhuang) people, are the most populous ethnic minority in China. Their national language is Zhuang, which belongs to the Zhuang-Dai branch of the Zhuang-Dong language family of the Sino-Tibetan language family. The history of the Zhuang can be traced back to the Han historical records of the pre-Qin, Qin and Han Dynasties, which recorded the "Xiou" and "Luoyue" ethnic groups living in the Lingnan region. Nowadays, the Zhuang people are found in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, but they mainly live in the southern region, extending from Guangdong Province in the east to the Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province in the west, to the Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province in the north, and to the Beibu Gulf area in the south. The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is the main settlement of the Zhuang.

On October 12, 1965, at the suggestion of Zhou Enlai, then Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, and with the consent of the Zhuang people, the State Council formally approved the change of the Chinese character "boy" from "boy tribe" to "Zhuang", which symbolizes strength and vitality. Zhuang", which symbolizes strength and vigor.

As an important ethnic minority in southern China, the origin and development of the Zhuang are closely linked to a variety of factors, including geography, creation myths, and historical documents. In the following, we will delve into the origins of the Zhuang from these different aspects.

2.1.1 Origins

The origin of one of the major ethnic minorities in southern China involves a variety of factors, including geography, creation myths, and historical documents. The following is an in-depth discussion of the group's origin from these aspects.

Primarily residing in the Guangxi Autonomous Region, located in southern China at the border between the subtropics and the tropics, this group's geographical environment is complex and varied. The landscape includes karst formations, river valley plains, hills, and mountains. These diverse terrains provided their ancestors with abundant natural resources and unique conditions for survival and development.

The subtropical climate, being warm and humid, supported the development of agriculture. In this environment, the ancestors of this ethnic group gradually established a way of life based on rice cultivation, which not only met their food needs but also contributed to their sedentary lifestyle and the formation of social structures. Additionally, abundant water and forest resources enabled a variety of production activities, including hunting, fishing, and gathering (Qin, 2004).

The geographical environment also deeply influenced the development of their culture. Elements such as clothing, architecture, and diet are closely linked to their surroundings. For example, traditional costumes, predominantly indigo-dyed, are a direct result of the subtropical climate and plentiful plant resources. Furthermore, their unique dry-fence style of architecture was developed to adapt to the region's humid conditions (Huang, X. F., et al, 1988).

Creation myths hold significant importance in their cultural heritage, serving as key narratives to explain their origin. In these myths, Bluto is revered as the creator god, responsible for forming the heavens, earth, rivers, mountains, and human beings. These stories, passed down through generations as oral tradition, became cultural symbols explaining the group's understanding of the world and their people's history.

The myth of Bluto not only reflects their ancestors' basic understanding of nature and the cosmos but also embodies their reverence for life and creativity. The tale vividly portrays the genesis of heaven and earth and the flourishing of life, emphasizing their ancestors' respect for and gratitude toward nature. Additionally, Bluto's image as the god of creation mirrors the veneration and admiration for ancestral figures (Huang, 2007).

Besides the myth of Bluto, other creation stories feature prominently in the folklore of this ethnic group. These rich narratives celebrate the bravery and wisdom of their ancestors, showcasing efforts to conquer nature, establish societal systems, and engage with other communities. These legends not only serve educational and entertainment purposes but also function as essential vehicles for preserving and transmitting history and culture (Liang, 2005).

Historical documents and oral traditions provide valuable insights into the origins of this people. Ancient texts like the *Shiji* and *Han Shu* record various groups in the Lingnan region. While direct references to this specific group are sparse, indirect information about related communities offers clues about their origins and development.

Numerous legends concerning the group's beginnings also circulate within their communities. These stories depict their ancestors' way of life and customs in vivid detail. For example, the tale of Mo Yi Da Wang describes the courage of the hero Mo Yi as he battles natural forces and rivals from other groups, while the story of The Hundred Bird Clothes recounts a dramatic struggle for freedom and love (Ou, 2016).

These historical documents and folktales provide essential information for understanding the origins of this people. Through careful analysis of such sources, we gain insights into their ancestors' way of life, social structures, and interactions with neighboring groups.

In addition to these narratives, archaeological findings offer further evidence of their ancient roots. A wealth of artifacts, including stone tools, pottery, and jade, has been uncovered at Neolithic sites within the region. These discoveries point to human activity in the area thousands of years ago, helping to reconstruct the production methods, lifestyle, and social organization of their forebears (Jiang, 2000).

Genetic studies provide new perspectives on the biological origins of this group. Techniques like DNA analysis allow researchers to trace the group's genetic lineage and their connections with other ethnic communities. Findings suggest both genetic similarities and distinctions between this group and other southern ethnicities, offering scientific insights into their origins and integration (Li, H., Pan, W. Y., Wen, B., et al., 2013).

Cultural exchanges and interactions with neighboring peoples, such as the Han and Yao, also played a significant role in shaping this group's development. These interactions fostered cultural growth and innovation, contributing to the broader tapestry of Chinese cultural diversity (Fan Honggui, 1998).

In summary, the origin of this ethnic group is a multifaceted historical process shaped by geography, creation myths, historical records, and other influences. These factors collectively formed the unique cultural and ethnic identity of the group, making them an integral part of the Chinese nation. Future research should continue to explore historical documents, archaeological findings, and multidisciplinary approaches to further unravel their history and evolution.

2.1.2 Development

The Zhuang, as one of the major ethnic minorities in southern China, can trace its historical roots back to the Baiyue ethnic group in ancient times. In the long course of history, the ancestors of the Zhuang people have created a rich and colorful primitive culture, leaving a valuable cultural heritage for future generations.

According to archaeological research, as early as the late Paleolithic period, there were traces of human activities in the Lingnan region. These primitive human beings used beaten stone tools and engaged in hunting, gathering and other primitive production activities. Entering the Neolithic Age, the Zhuang ancestors began to manufacture and use ground stone tools, and agricultural production gradually emerged, along with primitive pottery and textile technology (Qin Cailuan, 2012).

During this period, the ancestors of the Zhuang people created numerous unique primitive cultures. For example, the Dashi Shovel Culture, represented by its unique

large stone shovels, reflects the wisdom and creativity of the Zhuang ancestors in agricultural production. The Caipi Yan Culture, on the other hand, is known for its exquisite pottery and unique burial practices, demonstrating the achievements of the Zhuang ancestors in pottery making and religious beliefs (Huang Xianfan et al., 2002). The discovery and study of these primitive cultures have shed light on the social life and civilization development of the Zhuang in the ancient times.

During the Qin and Han Dynasties, with the expansion and unification of the Central Plains Dynasty, the Lingnan region gradually became an important territory of the Central Dynasty. After the unification of Lingnan by Emperor Qin Shi Huang, three counties, Guilin, Nanhai and Xiangxian, were established under his jurisdiction, among which Guilin County was located in the southwest of present-day Guiping, Guangxi, which was one of the earliest counties to be established in the Zhuang region (Huang Xianfan, 1988). The political unification of this period brought the culture and technology of the Central Plains to the Zhuang region, promoting the development and progress of the Zhuang society.

During the Western Han Dynasty, after Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty pacified the South Vietnamese State, he set up nine counties in the Lingnan region for more detailed jurisdiction. The establishment of these counties strengthened the central government's rule and management of the Zhuang region, and also promoted exchanges and integration between the Zhuang and Han peoples. During this period, agricultural production in the Zhuang region was further developed and improved, while handicrafts and commerce also began to emerge (Fan Honggui, 2007).

The period of Tang and Song Dynasty is an important stage in the historical development of the Zhuang people. The Tang Dynasty set up tie-up prefectures in the Zhuang area for ruling and managing. The effective rule and management of the Zhuang area was realized by appointing the local ethnic leaders as the governor or county magistrate. While maintaining the rule of the central dynasty, this system also respected the ethnic traditions and customs of the Zhuang area (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local History Compilation Committee, 2010). During the Song Dynasty, the Tushi system was further developed and gradually replaced the tie-up prefectures as one of the main forms of local rule (Fan Chengda, 2002).

The Tang and Song dynasties also saw significant economic development. With the advancement and promotion of agricultural production technology and the construction and improvement of water conservancy facilities, food production was greatly increased; craftsmen and workshops specializing in textiles, smelting and other industries appeared; and commercial trade forms such as regular bazaars and long-distance transportation were formed, which facilitated inter-regional economic ties and exchanges (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2020). In addition, culture and education in the Tang and Song dynasties also developed greatly, such as the emergence of many educational institutions such as academies

and private schools in the Zhuang region, which laid the foundation for the inheritance and development of Zhuang culture (Department of Education of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, ed. 2021).

The Yuan, Ming and Qing periods were another important stage in the historical development of the Zhuang people, a period in which the Zhuang region experienced many ethnic integration and resistance struggles, and at the same time contributed to the formation of the uniqueness and diversity of Zhuang culture.

During the Yuan Dynasty, a large number of Han people moved into the Zhuang area for reasons of war and cantonment, and worked with the Zhuang people to develop Lingnan. The migration of Han people brought advanced production technology and cultural concepts, which promoted economic and cultural exchanges and integration between the Zhuang and Han peoples (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Institute of Ethnic Studies, ed., 1984). Against this background, the social and economic development of the Zhuang people was furthered, and Zhuang culture absorbed the beneficial elements of Han culture, forming a more colorful cultural landscape.

During the Ming Dynasty, the *tusi* system in the Zhuang region was gradually developed and perfected. As the *de facto* rulers of the localities, the *tusi* had a far-reaching impact on the socio-economic and cultural development of the Zhuang areas. However, with the strengthening of the centralized system and the aggravation of feudal exploitation, the contradictions between the Zhuang people and the feudal dynasty became increasingly intensified. In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, a number of uprisings and struggles against feudal oppression broke out in the Zhuang region, among which the anti-Japanese struggle of Mrs. Wah is one of the famous national heroes' deeds in the history of the Zhuang people (Compilation Committee of Local Records of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, ed., 2010).

During the Qing Dynasty, resistance movements in the region inhabited by this ethnic minority became more frequent and intense. To strengthen its control and governance over the area, the Qing government implemented policies to reorganize the land and gradually replaced the landlord system with exiled officials. However, this strategy did little to ease the local people's resistance. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement stands out as one of the largest resistance efforts in the history of these communities, delivering a significant blow to Qing rule. Although the movement ultimately failed, the ideals of equality and justice it promoted had a lasting influence on society.

Throughout the periods of national integration and resistance during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, their culture continued to evolve and was passed down. While maintaining their unique cultural identity, these people actively incorporated elements from other ethnic groups, creating a distinctive cultural system. For instance,

their bronze drum tradition, the song festivals, and their distinctive three-tone singing style are all vital cultural phenomena that were further developed and inherited during this era.

In modern times, this ethnic group has endured a difficult struggle for national liberation and engaged in the process of modernization, playing a key role in the broader rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. After the Opium War, China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. At the time of national peril, the Zhuang people rose up against the exploitation and oppression by foreign invading forces and feudal rule. They actively participated in the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Movement, the Sino-French War and other resistance struggles, and made great sacrifices and efforts to defend national independence and dignity (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local History Compilation Committee, 2010).

The period after the Xinhai Revolution and before the founding of New China was an important period in the modern historical development of the Zhuang people. During this period, the Zhuang people experienced many political changes and social upheavals; at the same time, they also actively participated in various resistance struggles and democratic revolutions and made important contributions to the overthrow of feudal autocracy and the establishment of the new China (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Ethnic Affairs Commission, 2003). For example, in the Xinhai Revolution, many Zhuang volunteers joined in the struggle to overthrow the feudal dictatorship of the Qing Dynasty; in the War of Resistance Against Japan, the Zhuang people heroically fought against the Japanese invaders, demonstrating their firm national spirit and patriotic feelings (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Archives, ed., 2015).

After the founding of New China, the Zhuang people ushered in a brand new chapter in their history, and the establishment of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 1951 marked the realization of the dream of regional ethnic autonomy for the Zhuang people, and also started a new journey of modernization of the Zhuang region (People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2020). Under the leadership of the Party and the government, the socio-economic development of the Zhuang Autonomous Region has been rapid and comprehensive; especially since the reform and opening up of the Zhuang Autonomous Region, the region has made full use of its advantageous resources and development opportunities to vigorously develop special agricultural, industrial and service industries, which has promoted the vigorous development of the regional economy (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Statistics Bureau, 2020).

At the same time, the Zhuang culture has been protected and inherited, and the government has increased its efforts to protect and support the traditional culture of the Zhuang people and to promote the inheritance and innovative development of the Zhuang culture (Department of Culture of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region,

ed. 2021). In the fields of education, science and technology, and culture, the Zhuang people have also made remarkable achievements and progress, contributing significantly to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Department of Education of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2021).

Entering the twenty-first century, with the deepening of globalization and modernization, Zhuang society has shown a trend of diversification. In all fields, including the economy, culture and education, the Zhuang people have made remarkable progress and achievements.

On the economic front, the Zhuang region has made full use of its resources and geographical advantages to vigorously develop modern agriculture, tourism and other industries. Specialized agricultural products such as sugar, mulberry silkworms and fruits are exported both at home and abroad, making an important contribution to the region's economic growth. At the same time, with the opportunity of national strategies such as "One Belt, One Road", the Zhuang region actively participates in international exchanges and cooperation, which promotes the rapid development of foreign trade and the utilization of foreign capital (Statistics Bureau of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2023).

With regard to culture, the traditional culture of the Zhuang people has been effectively protected and passed on. The Government and all sectors of society have attached great importance to the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of the Zhuang people, such as the Zhuang singing polder, the copper drum culture, and the three tones of the Zhuang people, all of which have been included in the national list of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the cultural and artistic creation of the Zhuang people has also shown prosperous development, with a number of outstanding Zhuang writers and artists emerging, whose works have had a wide impact at home and abroad (Department of Culture of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2023).

With regard to education, the Zhuang region has made great strides in its educational endeavors. The popularization rate of compulsory education has continued to rise, and higher education and vocational education have also seen rapid development. The government has increased its investment in education, improved schooling conditions, and raised the quality of teachers, cultivating a large number of high-quality talents for the Zhuang region (Department of Education of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 2023). These talents have played an important role in promoting the economic and social development of the Zhuang region.

Looking back at the historical development of this ethnic group from ancient times to the present, many valuable lessons can be drawn. First, national unity is the foundation of prosperity and stability. Throughout history, these people have consistently worked alongside other ethnic groups, contributing to the flourishing of

Chinese civilization. Second, cultural diversity has been a driving force for social progress. With its unique charm and significance, the culture of this group has enriched the cultural heritage of the Chinese nation and added to the diversity of global culture. Lastly, innovation has remained an essential factor in national growth. In their journey toward modernization, they have continuously adapted their development strategies and practices, fostering steady and sustainable growth in the region's economy and society.

In the era of globalization, their community faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. On one hand, the cultural exchanges and interactions brought by globalization have affected traditional practices, leading to cultural dilution; on the other hand, globalization has opened new pathways for economic and social advancement in the region.

Regarding challenges, the influx of foreign cultures into the area has impacted traditional practices. Younger generations are showing less interest in heritage, which has led to concerns about cultural identity. Additionally, the intensified competition in the global economy has placed further pressures on regional development.

However, globalization has also brought significant opportunities to the area. First, it has fostered international cooperation, enabling the introduction of foreign capital, technology, and advanced management practices. Secondly, tourism has flourished, showcasing the region's natural beauty and rich cultural landscape to a global audience. Finally, globalization has created new platforms for the dissemination of their cultural legacy, allowing it to shine on the world stage.

In confronting the challenges and seizing the opportunities of globalization, their society must adopt proactive strategies. On one hand, it is vital to preserve and pass down traditional culture, fostering a strong sense of pride and identity among younger generations. On the other hand, they must actively engage with global trends, leveraging international resources and markets to accelerate regional economic and social growth.

2.1.3 Population distribution

The Zhuang are the most populous of China's ethnic minorities, with a total of 16,926,381 people. They are found in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, mainly in the south of China, ranging from Lianshan Zhuang and Yao Autonomous County in Guangdong Province in the east to Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province in the west, and from Congjiang County in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province in the north to the Gulf of Tonkin in the south. The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is the main distribution area of the Zhuang, with a total of 14,207,100 people, accounting for 87.81% of the total population of the Zhuang, mainly living in Nanning, Chongzuo, Baise, Hechi,

Liuzhou, Laibin, Guigang and other places. In addition, 981,000 people live in Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province, and 129,000 people live in other areas of Yunnan Province; 42,000 people live in Lianshan Zhuang and Yao Autonomous County of Guangdong Province, and another 4,000 people live in Xiashuai Zhuang and Yao Township of Huaji County, which is adjacent to Lianshan; 16,000 people live in Congjiang County of Guizhou Province; and more than 5,000 people live in Jianghua Yao Autonomous County of Hunan Province. more than 5,000 people. Wherever the Zhuang live, they are basically connected, mostly in clusters, with a considerable number of them living in mixed communities with the Han, Yao, Miao, Dong, Mulao, Maonan, and Shui ethnic groups. (National Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2024)

2.2 Knowledge about the Zhuang Culture

The Zhuang, as one of the many ethnic groups in China, have a long and unique cultural tradition. Their culture encompasses all aspects of life, from their profound belief system to their colorful costumes, from their distinctive architectural style to their unique food culture, to their marriage and funeral customs, and to their festivals filled with laughter and song. In this chapter, we will unveil the mysteries of the Zhuang culture one by one, and explore the historical origins and ethnic characteristics behind it. Through the detailed portrayal of Zhuang beliefs, costumes, architecture, food, marriage, funeral and festivals, we will not only be able to gain a deeper understanding of the way of life and values of this ethnic group, but also feel the love and inheritance of the Zhuang people for their own culture.

2.2.1 Beliefs

The formation of Zhuang beliefs is closely linked to their historical background. The Zhuang people mainly live in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and their belief system has integrated various elements of primitive religions, witchcraft, Taoism, and Buddhism in the process of long-term historical development. Especially in the exchanges with Han culture, Zhuang beliefs have continuously absorbed and integrated foreign cultures, forming a unique belief system (Fan, 2007).

The Zhuang people's worship of nature is an important part of their belief system. They worship natural objects such as mountains, water, trees and rocks, believing that these natural objects are divine and spiritual and can influence human destiny. For example, the Zhuang people often set up altars at the foot of mountains or by rivers to pray to the gods of mountains and water to bless the winds and rains and the harvests (Huang, 2002).

Ancestor worship occupies an important place in the beliefs of the Zhuang people. Believing that the souls of their ancestors can bless future generations, the Zhuang people set up ancestral tablets in their homes and offer sacrifices on a regular

basis. In addition, many legends and stories about ancestors have been passed down among the Zhuang, which have not only enriched the cultural connotation of the Zhuang, but also strengthened their sense of national identity and cohesion (Liang, 2005).

The Zhuang faith also incorporates elements of Taoism and Buddhism. Taoism's talismans, incantations, and spells are widely circulated in Zhuang folk beliefs, while Buddhism's concepts of karma and reincarnation are also accepted by Zhuang people. The incorporation of these foreign religious elements has made the Zhuang belief system more diverse and complex (Mo, 2009).

The Zhuang belief system is characterized by pluralism. It incorporates elements of primitive religion, witchcraft, Taoism, Buddhism and other elements, forming a belief system with unique characteristics. This plurality is reflected not only in the content of beliefs, but also in the way of beliefs and the objects of beliefs.

Zhuang beliefs are highly utilitarian. The Zhuang people sacrifice to their gods and ancestors, often in order to pray for realistic benefits such as good weather, abundant harvests and family peace. They establish contact with the deities through sacrificial activities and seek their shelter and help.

Zhuang beliefs are closely linked to folk activities. Many folk activities, such as singing puebls, Zhuang brocade making, and copper drum beating, are related to Zhuang beliefs. These folk activities have not only enriched the cultural life of the Zhuang people, but also inherited and developed the Zhuang faith culture (Qin, 2004).

The Zhuang faith, as an important part of traditional culture, remains significant in contemporary society. First, it helps to maintain social stability and national unity. Through common beliefs and rituals, the Zhuang people have strengthened their sense of national identity and cohesion. Secondly, Zhuang faith plays an important role in the transmission and development of national culture. Many folk stories, legends and folk activities carry rich historical and cultural information and are important materials for studying Zhuang culture. Finally, Zhuang beliefs also help promote regional economic development. Some faith-related folk activities such as song polder and Zhuang brocade production have become regional cultural brands, attracting a large number of tourists to visit and travel (Pan, 1988).

In summary, Zhuang beliefs, as an important part of traditional culture, remain significant in contemporary society.

2.2.2 Clothing

The Zhuang, as one of the major ethnic minorities in southern China, has a long history of dress culture and carries profound historical and cultural connotations. Zhuang dress is not only a necessity of life, but also an important symbol of national identity, cultural heritage and social status.

The diversity of Zhuang costumes is reflected in their rich styles, colors and patterns. Due to the vast area inhabited by the Zhuang, different regions have different styles of dress. For example, Zhuang women in the northern part of Gui prefer to wear button-down tops and wide-legged pants, while those in the southern part of Gui favor short tops and pleated skirts (Huang, 2002). In terms of color, Zhuang clothing is mostly in blue, black and white, which are not only resistant to dirt and easy to match, but also symbolize the simplicity and diligence of the Zhuang people. In terms of motifs, Zhuang women are good at embroidering various natural elements such as flowers, birds, fish and insects on their costumes, which are not only beautiful and generous, but also contain rich symbolic meanings (Liang, 2005).

The cultural connotation of Zhuang clothing is profound. On the one hand, it is a manifestation of the Zhuang people's reverence for nature and love of life. Many dress patterns come from nature, such as the sun, the moon, the stars, landscapes, flowers and birds, etc. These patterns not only beautify the dresses, but also support the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of a better life. On the other hand, Zhuang costumes are also the carrier of ethnic identity and cultural inheritance. By wearing the same or similar costumes, the Zhuang people are able to strengthen their ethnic identity; at the same time, the patterns and symbols on the costumes convey the history, culture and values of the ethnic group (Qin, 2004).

In the long course of history, Zhuang costumes have undergone many evolutions. With the development of society and the changes of the times, Zhuang costumes have undergone significant changes in style, material and craftsmanship. For example, in recent times, with the advance of industrialization and urbanization, many traditional Zhuang costumes have been gradually replaced by modern ones; however, in some remote areas and at traditional festivals, traditional Zhuang costumes are still preserved and inherited (Pan, 1988).

For the study of Zhuang costumes, the academic world has already achieved certain results. Many scholars have deeply explored and analyzed the Zhuang costumes from multiple perspectives, such as history, culture and art. For example, some scholars have studied the pattern art of Zhuang costumes and its symbolism (Mo, 2009); some scholars have explored the relationship between Zhuang costumes and national identity (Fan, 2009); and some scholars have put forward suggestions on the inheritance and development of Zhuang costumes from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage protection (He, 2010). These studies not only enhance our understanding of Zhuang dress culture, but also provide valuable information and inspiration for future research.

In modern society, the inheritance and innovation of Zhuang costumes are facing many challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, with the change of lifestyle and the influence of fashion trends, many young people's interest in traditional costumes has gradually weakened; on the other hand, with the development of tourism and the

emphasis on cultural heritage protection, the Zhuang costume as a unique cultural resource has gradually attracted attention and importance (Fan& Yang, 2012).

In order to pass on and innovate the Zhuang dress culture, a variety of measures need to be taken. Firstly, to strengthen the protection and inheritance of traditional dress-making skills, and to cultivate more inherited talents; secondly, to promote the combination of Zhuang dress with modern fashion, and to design dress products that meet modern aesthetics as well as embodying ethnic characteristics; and lastly, to strengthen foreign exchanges and cooperation, so as to let more people understand and appreciate the Zhuang dress culture (Mo&Huang,2011).

To summarize, as a unique cultural phenomenon, the Zhuang dress deserves our in-depth study and exploration in terms of its diversity, cultural connotation, historical evolution and modern inheritance. Through the in-depth study of Zhuang costumes, we can not only better understand and respect the cultural traditions of this ethnic group, but also provide new inspirations and ideas for modern costume design.

2.2.3 Construction

Among the rich cultural heritage of the Zhuang, an important ethnic minority in southern China, the art of architecture undoubtedly occupies an important position. With its unique style, deep historical heritage and rich cultural connotation, Zhuang architecture has become the focus of research by many scholars. The purpose of this paper is to provide a more comprehensive perspective and analysis of the inheritance and development of Zhuang culture by thoroughly exploring the historical evolution, main features and value of Zhuang architecture in modern society.

The history of Zhuang architecture can be traced back to the time of the ancient Baiyue ethnic group. According to historical records and archaeological discoveries, the buildings of this period were mainly made of wooden structures and bamboo weaving, and the way of overhanging construction was initially formed, i.e., the prototype of dry-rail building (Wu, 1989). This form of architecture not only adapted to the hot and humid climate and terrain conditions in the south, but also reflected the Zhuang ancestors' reverence for and utilization of the natural environment. With the passage of time, Zhuang architecture gradually developed and expanded. In their long-term practice, the Zhuang people have accumulated rich architectural experience and formed unique architectural styles and techniques.

During the Qin and Han Dynasties, with the introduction of the Central Plains culture, Zhuang architecture began to be influenced by Han architecture, and some new architectural forms and styles appeared. For example, some palaces, temples and other buildings in the Zhuang areas began to adopt traditional Han architectural forms such as heavy-eaved hermetic roofs and overhanging mountain roofs (Yang, 2009). These new architectural forms and styles are integrated with the traditional Zhuang dry-structure, forming a colorful Zhuang architectural landscape.

By the Tang and Song dynasties, with the economic and cultural development of the Zhuang region, Zhuang architecture also ushered in a new peak. During this period, Zhuang architecture was not only more grand in scale, but also more exquisite and diversified in architectural style and decoration. Some palaces, temples and other buildings began to adopt decorative techniques such as glazed tiles and carved beams, showing a very high level of art (Zhou, 2006).

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Zhuang architecture further developed and expanded. During this period, Zhuang architecture continued to innovate and develop on the basis of inheriting traditions. Some new architectural forms and styles began to appear, such as the "triple eaves" and "horse-head wall" (Yang, 2009). These new architectural forms and styles have not only enriched the connotation and extension of Zhuang architecture, but also made it more characterized by regional and national characteristics.

Zhuang architecture is famous for its unique style and rich cultural connotation. Among them, the dry-rail building is the most representative form of architecture. This form of architecture uses wood as the main material and adopts the way of constructing in the air, forming a spatial layout with three floors: the upper, middle and lower floors. The upper level houses people, the middle level piles up sundries or serves as an activity place, and the lower level raises livestock or places agricultural tools, etc. (Zhou, 2018). This layout is not only practical and able to meet the production and living needs of the Zhuang people, but also reflects their wisdom of living in harmony with the natural environment.

In addition to the unique spatial layout, Zhuang architecture is also highly characterized in terms of decoration. The beams, pillars, eaves and other parts of the buildings are often carved with exquisite patterns and symbols, such as dragons, phoenixes, flowers and birds. These patterns and symbols not only beautify the buildings themselves, but also contain rich cultural connotations and symbolism (Tang, 2012). For example, dragons and phoenixes are auspicious symbols in the traditional culture of the Zhuang people, signifying good fortune and goodness; flowers and birds are beautiful elements in nature, symbolizing the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of a better life.

In addition, Zhuang architecture also emphasizes integration with the natural environment. In the selection of building sites and layouts, the Zhuang people took into full consideration natural factors such as topography, climate and water sources, and sought to harmonize the buildings with their surroundings. For example, dry-structure buildings constructed in mountainous areas are often located on the slopes of mountains in a staggered manner; dry-structure buildings constructed near water are often built near the water, mirroring rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water (Chen, 2011). This concept of focusing on ecological balance and sustainable development is still of great relevance in today's society.

With the development of modern society, Zhuang architecture faces the challenge of conservation and development. On the one hand, traditional Zhuang architecture has high historical and cultural value due to its unique architectural style and choice of materials, and needs to be properly protected; on the other hand, with the change in people's lifestyles and the development of the tourism industry, Zhuang architecture also needs to adapt to the new needs and environment, and undergo innovation and development.

In this case, how to innovate on the basis of protecting tradition has become a key issue in the development of Zhuang architecture. Some scholars and practitioners have attempted to combine Zhuang architectural elements with modern architectural design to create new building forms that have modern functions while retaining traditional cultural features (Qiu& Yang, 2017). For example, in the planning of some tourist attractions, designers have skillfully used the elements and styles of Zhuang architecture to create modern architectural landscapes with strong ethnic characteristics; the skillful use and innovative development of Zhuang architectural elements can also be seen in the public buildings of some cities.

However, there are also challenges in the process of preserving and developing Zhuang architecture. First, some traditional Zhuang buildings are in danger of destruction and disappearance due to age and lack of protection; second, some new architectural forms and styles may lack the connection and connotation with traditional culture, although they have modern functions; and finally, some commercialized development behaviors may excessively pursue economic benefits while neglecting the protection of cultural values (Huang & Qin, 2013).

In summary, Zhuang architecture also has important cultural value in modern society. As an important part of Zhuang culture, Zhuang architecture carries rich historical information and national cultural memory. By studying and excavating the cultural connotation and value of Zhuang architecture, we can better understand and pass on the Zhuang culture

2.2.4 Diet

The dietary customs of the Zhuang people, who mainly live in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, are an important part of Zhuang culture. In their long-term production and living practices, the Zhuang people have created a rich and colorful food culture and formed unique food customs. These customs not only satisfy the physiological needs of the Zhuang people, but also carry the important functions of national identity, social communication and cultural inheritance. Therefore, an in-depth study of the dietary customs of the Zhuang people has important academic value and cultural significance. Five-color Glutinous Rice: This is a traditional delicacy of the Zhuang people, which uses the juice of red and blue grass, yellow rice flowers, maple leaves, purple tomato vine and other plants to soak glutinous rice and

make five-color glutinous rice in red, yellow, black, purple and white. It is brightly colored and symbolizes a good life and good fortune.

Lemon Duck: This is a specialty dish from the Wuming area of Nanning, Guangxi. Its unique sour and spicy taste comes from the perfect combination of ingredients such as sour chili pepper and sour lemon with duck meat, which makes it appetizing.

Mochi Pork: marinated panko wrapped in glutinous rice and steamed. This dish combines the aromatic softness of the glutinous rice with the tenderness of the pancetta for a rich flavor.

Snail Vermicelli: With its unique flavor of sour, spicy, fresh, refreshing and hot, it ranks first among the Liuzhou snacks. It is made of Liuzhou's unique soft, smooth and refreshing rice noodles, together with ingredients such as sour bamboo shoots, fungus, peanuts, deep-fried bean curd, yellow cauliflower, fresh greens and other ingredients, as well as the rich and moderate sour and spicy flavors and broth of boiled snails.

Zongzi: The Spring Festival of the Zhuang people from the New Year's Eve to the first day of the first month, the second, a total of three days, these three days the master and guests must eat zongzi. The dumplings symbolize a rich harvest, and their filling is made from peeled green beans, half-fat pork neck meat and grass-fruit powder, which tastes very fresh when cooked.

Fireweed Poi: Also known as Qingming Grass Poi, it is made by mixing rice and glutinous rice according to a certain proportion, adding cleaned Qingming Grass and an appropriate amount of sugar and steaming, and then putting it into the pestle and pestle and pounding it until it is extremely viscous and made into Poi. Its sweet and delicious flavor is unforgettable.

In addition to the above, there are also mochi, Zhuang dumplings, Laoyou noodles, Guilin rice noodles, etc., which are also representative of the cuisine of the Zhuang people. Each of these cuisines is distinctive and rich in taste, demonstrating the unique culinary skills and choice of ingredients of the Zhuang people.

The people of this ethnic group have a rich and diverse selection of ingredients, with rice and corn as their staples, complemented by various potatoes, beans, and other grains. When it comes to meat, they prefer pork, chicken, duck, and fish, though beef and mutton are also part of their diet. Additionally, they are skilled at utilizing the resources of mountainous regions, gathering wild vegetables, fruits, and mushrooms to supplement their meals. This choice of ingredients reflects not only their adaptation to the natural environment but also the diversity of their dietary habits and their focus on balanced nutrition.

Their cuisine features a variety of cooking methods, including stir-frying, stewing, boiling, steaming, and deep-frying. In terms of seasoning, their dishes emphasize the natural flavors, skillfully combining sour, spicy, salty, and sweet tastes. Specialties like sour meat, sour fish, sour bamboo shoots, and five-color glutinous rice are not only vibrant and aromatic but also carry strong ethnic and local characteristics.

When preparing food, they focus on the freshness and hygiene of ingredients and pay close attention to cooking techniques and temperature control. They are also adept at using local produce and seasonings in creative ways, forming a distinctive regional cuisine. These unique dishes not only cater to the community's taste preferences but also serve as an important showcase for their culinary traditions.

As for dietary habits, they emphasize a healthy approach to eating, promoting slow chewing and smaller, more frequent meals. They also practice food therapy to regulate the body and prevent illness. Numerous proverbs and songs about food circulate in their region, such as "Drinking soup before eating, no need to ask for a prescription," reflecting their deep understanding and unique perspective on healthy eating.

In summary, the Zhuang people's choice of ingredients, dietary structure, cooking methods and table manners reflect their adaptation and utilization of the natural environment and their pursuit of a healthy diet. At the same time, these dietary customs also carry the important functions of ethnic identity, social interaction and cultural inheritance.

2.2.5 Marriage

Currently, the Zhuang generally practice monogamy, which is the basic form of marriage in Zhuang society.

The researcher is a member of the Zhuang ethnic group, and according to the researcher's observation over a long period of time, he has gained a deeper understanding of Zhuang marriage customs. Here is an example of the marriage customs of the Zhuang people that have been understood by the researcher. The following will be a detailed introduction from three aspects: free love, preparation before marriage, and the process on the wedding day and the ceremony after marriage.

2.2.5.1 Marriage and love

In Zhuang society, free love is one of the important ways in which marriages are formed. In the past, young men and women met and expressed their feelings through singing, dancing and song pairing on occasions such as song dikes, festivals and agricultural seasons. They would meet in the mountains, fields, and at the end of villages to convey their love through songs, and this free and romantic way of falling in love was loved by the Zhuang people.

Nowadays, with the development of the Internet and media, in addition to the traditional choosing a spouse by singing songs, modern Zhuang youths also meet the opposite sex through social media, friend introductions, online dating platforms, and many other ways. These new ways of falling in love provide them with more opportunities and choices.

In the process of free love, Zhuang young men and women enjoy greater autonomy. They can choose the object of their desire and determine their relationship by giving each other tokens of affection and settling their love. Families and society usually respect their choices, and as long as the two parties are in love with each other and are compatible, they are generally recognized and supported by their families.

However, although free love is prevalent in Zhuang society, it does not mean that one can be completely free from the influence of family and society. In practice, factors such as family background, economic conditions and social status still have some influence on the choice of marriage.

2.2.5.2 Preparation for marriage

In the tradition of the Zhuang people, the preparations before marriage are tedious and full of rituals. This mainly includes choosing an auspicious date, preparing the bride price and dowry, and decorating the new house.

First of all, choosing an auspicious date is an important part of the process before getting married. The Zhuang believe that an auspicious date can bring good luck and happiness to the newlyweds, so they will ask a fortune-teller to project the best date for the wedding based on the birth dates of both parties. Once this date is set, it becomes the central time point for the entire wedding preparation.

Secondly, the preparation of the bride price and dowry is also an essential part before marriage. The bride price is a gift from the man's family to the woman's family as a sign of respect and gratitude to the woman's family. The type and amount of the bride price varies from region to region and from family to family, but it usually includes cash, gold and silver jewelry, clothing, food, etc. The dowry is a gift from the woman's family to the woman's family to show their respect and gratitude. The dowry, on the other hand, is the dowry items prepared by the woman's family for her daughter, including clothing, bedding, furniture, electrical appliances and other daily necessities, as well as gold and silver jewelry and other valuables. These dowries not only represent the financial strength of the woman's family and their care for their daughters, but are also an important guarantee for the bride in her post-wedding life.

Finally, decorating the new house is also an important task before the wedding. The new house is an important place for the couple's life after marriage, so it must be carefully decorated. In the tradition of the Zhuang people, the decoration of the new house usually includes putting up happy characters, hanging red lanterns, placing

furniture and electrical appliances, etc. In addition, some auspicious items will be placed in the new house, such as red dates and red lanterns. In addition, some auspicious items, such as red dates, peanuts, cinnamon balls, lotus seeds, etc. (meaning "early birth"), are placed in the new house to pray for the couple's happiness after marriage.

2.2.5.3 Process on the day of marriage and ceremony after marriage

The wedding day is the culminating part of a Zhuang wedding, filled with festivities and hilarity. The groom will travel to the bride's home to welcome the bride, who will cross a burning charcoal pot (which signifies warding off evil spirits and removing unlucky objects) on her way back to the groom's home. Upon arrival at the groom's home, the couple performs a worship ceremony, bowing to the spirits of heaven and earth and the elders to express their gratitude. This is followed by a feast, where the bride and groom will entertain guests and receive their blessings.

In the Zhuang tradition, the ceremony after marriage is also very important. This consists mainly of returning to the door and falling to the husband's family. Returning to the door means that the bride returns to her mother's home to visit her parents and receive their blessings within a certain period of time (usually three or seven days) after the wedding. This link not only reflects the bride's respect and gratitude to her parents, but is also one of the important customs in traditional Zhuang weddings. Falling into the husband's family, on the other hand, is the process of the bride officially moving into her husband's family after returning to her home. During this process, the bride will gradually adapt to her new environment and role and start her married life.

In addition, there are a number of customs and ceremonies related to life after marriage in the Zhuang tradition. For example, on the wedding night, the bride and groom will perform the "fm radio" ceremony (i.e., drink a cup of wine), which signifies that they will become a family and face the challenges of life together. Meanwhile, after the marriage, the bride regularly visits her husband's ancestral tomb to pay homage to her ancestors and pray for the family's peace and happiness. These customs and ceremonies not only enrich the traditional wedding culture of the Zhuang people, but also reflect the importance and respect the Zhuang people attach to family and marriage.

In the Zhuang ethnic group, the wedding day is often busy from early in the morning. The bride wakes up early, gets well groomed, and puts on the beautiful traditional Zhuang dresses, which have been hand-sewn by her family or herself. These dresses are usually characterized by bright colors and exquisite embroidery decorations, displaying strong ethnic characteristics.

At the same time, the groom will also be ready to go to the bride's home to meet the bride. Before arriving at the bride's home, the groom and the wedding party will

often be the bride's female companions "door" test, the groom needs to sing, answer or give red envelopes and other ways to "pass through", in order to successfully receive the bride.

After receiving the bride, the groom carries or carries her on his back to the groom's house. On the way, the bride has to cross a burning charcoal pot, which symbolizes warding off evil spirits and removing unlucky objects, and praying for a safe and smooth life after marriage.

After arriving at the groom's house, the couple will perform a worship ceremony. In the center of the hall, the newlyweds first pay homage to the gods of heaven and earth, then to the elders and townspeople, and finally to each other as husband and wife. This ceremony not only honors heaven and earth and the elders, but also symbolizes that the newlyweds are now husband and wife and will face their future life together.

This is followed by a feasting session, where the bride and groom will entertain their guests and receive their blessings. The guests will present the couple with red packets, gifts and words of blessing to share this joyous occasion.

2.2.5.4 Post-marriage ceremonies

In the Zhuang tradition, the ceremonies following marriage are also very important. First, there is the custom of "returning to the door", whereby the bride returns to her mother's home to visit her parents shortly after the wedding (usually three or seven days later). This custom not only shows the bride's respect and gratitude to her parents, but is also a way for the bride to show her parents how she is doing after the wedding. During the return visit, the bride reports to her parents on her life in her husband's family and receives their teachings and blessings.

In addition to returning to the door, the Zhuang people also have the custom of "not leaving the husband's home". This means that the bride does not settle in her husband's home immediately after the wedding, but continues to live in her mother's home for a certain period of time (the length of which varies according to region and family). During this period, the bride regularly visits her husband and in-laws, but does not spend the night in her husband's home. It is not until the bride becomes pregnant or after a period of time that she officially moves in with her husband's family. The existence of this custom may be related to the status of women in Zhuang society, and through the custom of "not staying at the husband's house", the bride can maintain a certain degree of independence after marriage.

When the bride finally settles in her husband's family, she will begin her post-wedding life. In the Zhuang tradition, life after marriage emphasizes the virtues of harmony between husband and wife, respect for the elderly, love for the young, hard work and thrift. The bride will try to adapt to her new environment and role, and

share the responsibilities and duties of the family with her husband. At the same time, she will continue to maintain close contact and communication with her mother's family and work together to maintain the harmony and happiness of both families.

In general, the marriage and love customs of the Zhuang people are colorful and have strong ethnic characteristics. From free love to the preparations for marriage to the process of the wedding day and the ceremonies after the wedding, each link is full of rituals and cultural connotations. These customs not only reflect the way of life and values of the Zhuang people, but also provide a unique perspective to understand the society, history and culture of the Zhuang people.

2.2.6 Funerals

The funeral rituals of the Zhuang people are a deep and complex cultural tradition, full of respect, remembrance of the dead and belief in the afterlife. Below is a more detailed description of the Zhuang funeral rituals.

In Zhuang society, when someone passes away, the family will first set off a large firecracker, an act that is both a signal of mourning to the village people and friends, and a farewell ceremony for the deceased. The sound of the firecrackers echoes in the night sky, announcing the end of a life and symbolizing the beginning of a new journey for the soul.

Immediately thereafter, the main family will send someone to report the funeral to the outside family and the next of kin, and invite a Taoist priest to do the dao. Taoist priests are religious people in the Zhuang society who are responsible for conducting funeral ceremonies and guiding the souls of the deceased into the afterlife. The dojos are set up so that the deceased will have divine protection from evil spirits on their way to the underworld.

In the tradition of the Zhuang, the deceased in the coffin before the need to go through two baptism. The first baptism is for the deceased to scrub the body, put on new clothes, new shoes, and put a silver dollar in the mouth of the deceased, commonly known as "gold". This act signifies that the deceased will be able to live a rich life in the afterlife. The second ablution is to bathe the deceased again in water made from pomelo and peach leaves, and to change into new clothes. This session is meant to purify the body of the deceased so that he or she can enter the netherworld in a clean state.

At the time of burial, the Zhuang will put on a new hat or wrap a turban for the deceased according to his/her gender and preference during his/her lifetime, and hold a fan or a handkerchief in his/her hand. These items are the necessities of the deceased in the afterlife, but also the family's hobbies of the deceased in life a kind of remembrance. In the process of encoffining, filial men and women will let out their

cries to express their grief and reluctance to part with the deceased. Their cries are intertwined with the sound of drums and firecrackers, creating a solemn atmosphere.

The time for the body to rest is usually three days, during which time relatives and old friends will come to offer condolences and sprinkle wine for sacrifice. Condolence is one of the important parts of the Zhuang funeral ceremony, which is not only a tribute to the deceased, but also a way of emotional exchange between friends and relatives. During the condolence process, people will offer wine, flowers, paper money and other items to the deceased to show their remembrance and respect for the deceased. At the same time, they will also comfort and encourage each other with the main family to get through this sad time together.

In the tradition of the Zhuang people, earth burial is the main method of burial. However, unlike the earth burials of the Han Chinese, the Zhuang usually choose the "second burial" as their main burial style. That is, after the death of their relatives, they will first bury them in thin coffins nearby, and when their flesh and muscles decay in three to five years, they will dig up the graves and open the coffins again to put their bones into ceramic "gold coffins", and then choose a place of good feng shui to bury them again. This method of burial reflects the Zhuang people's respect for their ancestors and their belief in the afterlife. They believe that the souls of the dead can be better rested and blessed through the second burial, and that the feng shui of the family can be better improved and upgraded.

In addition to the normal funeral rites, for people who die unnatural deaths (e.g., premature deaths, homicides, etc.), the Zhuang believe that they will turn into evil spirits and therefore must be cremated. During the cremation process, Taoist priests would chant and fast and jump over the fire pit to drive away evil spirits and evil ghosts. This act is both a rite of passage for the deceased and a protective measure for the family and the community. Through the rituals of cremation and chanting and fasting, the Zhuang believe that they can free the souls of the dead from evil and guide them into a bright afterlife.

In general, the funeral ceremony of the Zhuang is a cultural tradition full of reverence and remembrance. It is not only about mourning and respect for the dead, but also about reverence for life and faith in the afterlife. These traditional practices have been passed down from generation to generation in Zhuang society, becoming an important part of their culture and reflecting the Zhuang people's profound understanding and unique interpretation of life and death.

2.2.7 Festivals

The Zhuang people have colorful traditional festivals, the most representative of which are the "March 3" Song Festival, the Cow's Soul Festival, and the Mid-Yuan Festival, etc. The following is a detailed introduction to these festivals. The following is a detailed introduction to these festivals:

"March 3" Song Festival: This is one of the grandest traditional festivals of the Zhuang people, and is also the day on which the Zhuang people pay homage to the Pangu Patriarchs and the Bluto Patriarchs. Every year on the third day of the third month of the lunar calendar, the Zhuang people will put on their costumes and gather in the fields or by the riverside to hold a grand gathering of folk songs. During this festival, young men and women will sing songs to each other to express their love, and it is also an important time to show the talent of Zhuang folk songs. In addition to the songs, there are also traditional activities such as throwing embroidered balls and grabbing firecrackers, and the atmosphere is warm and cheerful. Nowadays, the "March 3" Song Festival has become a legal holiday in Guangxi, where Zhuang people can celebrate this important traditional festival together.

Niu Soul Festival: Also known as "Niu Wang Festival" and "Kai Yang Festival", this is a traditional festival celebrated by the Zhuang, Dong and Mulao ethnic groups. The festival is usually held on the eighth day of the fourth month, the eighth day of the sixth month or the eighth day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, the exact date varying from region to region. On the day of the Cow Soul Festival, the Zhuang people will groom the cows, repair their pens, and bring a basket of five-colored glutinous rice and a bunch of fresh grass to the side of the pens to offer sacrifices to the cow's soul. This festival reflects the gratitude and respect of the Zhuang people for the ox and shows the importance of agricultural production in Zhuang society.

Zhongyuan Festival: The Zhongyuan Festival, which falls on the 14th day of the 7th month of the lunar calendar, is also known as the "Ghost Festival" or "Ancestor Worship Festival" in the Zhuang region. The main contents of this festival are ancestor worship and ghost worship. On this day, every Zhuang family will kill chickens and ducks, steam cakes and make buns, and cut all kinds of colored paper into seasonal clothes and pants to prepare for the festival. During the day, they worship their ancestors at home, and at night, they go to the foot of the mountain and the river to make wild sacrifices, burn incense and candles, and burn paper clothes, in order to pray for the ancestors and the gods to bless their families with peace and health.

In addition to the above three major festivals, the Zhuang people also have unique traditional festivals such as the Longduan Festival, the Gyro Festival and the Flower Lady Festival. These festivals not only enrich the cultural life of the Zhuang people, but also transmit the history and culture of the Zhuang people. During these festivals, the Zhuang people hold a variety of activities such as song and dance performances, sports competitions, sacrificial ceremonies, etc., showing strong ethnic flavor and local characteristics.

In addition, the annual festivals of the Zhuang people are basically the same as those of the local Han people, such as the Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival, the Spring and Autumn Society Day, Ching Ming, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn

Festival, Chung Yeung Festival and New Year's Eve. During these festivals, the Zhuang people also celebrate according to traditional customs, such as putting up spring couplets, setting off firecrackers, and having reunion dinners. These common festival customs not only enhance the cultural exchange and integration between Zhuang and Han peoples, but also enrich the cultural diversity of the Chinese nation.

In addition to the previously mentioned festivals, the Zhuang people have a number of other unique and interesting traditional festivals that are deeply integrated into the life and culture of the Zhuang people.

Longduan Festival: This is a festival established in honor of the legendary national heroes, the three Longduan brothers, also known as the "Longduan Street Festival". Every year, on the fifth day of the first month of the lunar calendar, the Zhuang people will gather on Longduan Mountain and hold a grand celebration. During the festival, there are song and dance performances, acrobatic shows, horse races, cockfights and other traditional entertainment programs, as well as a wealth of special food for people to taste. This festival is not only a time to honor the heroes, but also a time for the Zhuang people to display their talents and spirit of unity.

Gyro Festival: In areas populated by the Zhuang people, playing the gyro is a popular traditional sports activity. The festival is usually held in the Spring Festival or after the fall harvest in the agricultural leisure time, the competition, the participants need to gyro fast and stable, the longest duration of the winner. This festival not only exercises people's body, but also promotes friendship and unity among neighbors.

Flower Lady Festival: This is a traditional folk festival of the Zhuang people, also known as the "Flower King Virgin Festival". It is held on the third day of the third month or the sixth day of the sixth month of the lunar calendar every year. During this festival, Zhuang women will dress up, bring their own garlands and embroideries, and go to the Flower Goddess Temple to pay homage to her. They pray to the Flower Lady to grant their children health, peace and happiness. Meanwhile, there are also singing and dancing performances and market trading activities, which attract many tourists to come to watch and participate.

These festivals not only enrich the cultural life of the Zhuang people, but also pass on the history and culture of the Zhuang people. Through these celebrations, the Zhuang people express their admiration for their ancestors, their reverence for nature, as well as their yearning for and pursuit of a better life. At the same time, these festivals have become an important platform for the Zhuang people to communicate and interact with the Han and other ethnic groups, promoting ethnic unity and cultural diversity.

In general, the traditional festivals of the Zhuang people are an important part of their national culture, carrying the historical memory, religious beliefs, aesthetic concepts and values of the Zhuang people. The celebration of these festivals not only

demonstrates the unique ethnic customs and local characteristics of the Zhuang people, but also strengthens the sense of national identity and cohesion, adding a colorful touch to the cultural diversity of the Chinese nation.

2.3 Knowledge about the Zhuang Brocade

2.3.1 Origins

The origin of Zhuang brocade can be traced back to a very long time ago, and although the exact time of its origin is difficult to prove, it has been clearly documented in the Song Dynasty. This traditional handicraft has become an important part of the Zhuang culture with its exquisite skills and rich cultural connotations.

The origin of Zhuang brocade has been recorded in historical documents. The *Ling Wai Dai Ai* is an important geographic work of the Southern Song Dynasty, in which the author Zhou Zhaifei describes in detail the exquisite skills of Zhuang brocade and the social status at that time. He wrote, "The Dongbei barbarians in the left and right rivers of Yongzhou have woven white square patterns with wide widths and large strands, resembling the threaded ropes of Zhongdu, but they are beautiful and thick, which is true that they are above the clothes in the south." (Zhou, 1996) This description not only confirms the existence of Zhuang brocade in the Song Dynasty, but also reveals that it already had a high level of craftsmanship and aesthetic value at that time.

In addition, the "Boy Brocade Song" circulated among the Zhuang folk also provides us with clues about the origin of Zhuang brocade. In this song, it is sung: "Silk is fastened like moss, help you weave a brocade and bring it back." (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum, 1985) This shows that Zhuang women had already mastered brocade weaving in ancient times and used it as an important form of cultural expression.

From a technical point of view, Zhuang brocade weaving was developed on the basis of general textile technology. Archaeological data show that at least during the Warring States period, the ancestors of the Zhuang people had already mastered textile technology. For example, the ceramic spinning wheel found in the Warring States tomb at Yinsanling, Pingle, Guangxi, proves that the local ancestors were able to utilize spinning wheels for twisting and weaving in the Warring States period (Jiang Tingyu, 1974). During the Han Dynasty, the Zhuang brocade weaving technique was further developed and gradually developed its unique style. According to the *Book of Han*, at that time, the ancestors of the Zhuang were already able to produce colorful and beautifully patterned brocades, which were not only used for daily wear, but were also widely used as decorations in all aspects of life (*Book of Han*, Volume 28, II).

With the continuous development of the Zhuang society, brocade weaving techniques have also been continuously improved and innovated. Most studies believe that the techniques and patterns of Zhuang brocade have a close relationship with the cultural relics of the ancient southern region. From pattern design to color application, from weaving technique to product usage, Zhuang brocade shows its unique artistic charm and cultural connotation. It not only highlights the unique charm of the traditional culture of the Zhuang people, but also is a bright pearl in the multicultural treasury of the Chinese nation. Therefore, the origin of Zhuang brocade can be traced back to ancient times, and it is an excellent cultural heritage created by the Zhuang people in the long-term production practice.

2.3.2 Raw materials

Zhuang brocade, as an important part of traditional Chinese handicrafts, is loved by people for its unique weaving techniques and exquisite pattern designs. The choice of raw materials for brocade weaving has a crucial impact on its quality and beauty.

The main raw materials for Zhuang brocade weaving include cotton, silk and linen threads. The choice of these raw materials is closely linked to the geographical environment, climatic conditions and cultural traditions in which the Zhuang people live.

First of all, cotton thread is one of the commonly used raw materials in Zhuang brocade. Cotton is a widely grown crop in Guangxi, so cotton thread became the main source of Zhuang brocade. Cotton thread is soft and breathable, suitable for making light brocade in summer. Zhuang women use cotton thread to weave various exquisite patterns, such as flowers, birds, landscapes and figures, which are full of life and ethnic characteristics.

Secondly, silk thread is also an indispensable raw material in Zhuang brocade. The soft texture and high luster of silk thread make the brocade more gorgeous and noble. In Zhuang brocade, silk thread is often used to weave the outlines and details of the patterns, such as the feathers of flowers and birds and the clothing patterns of people. The use of silk thread not only enriches the color and sense of hierarchy of brocade, but also enhances its artistic value.

In addition, twine is also one of the common raw materials in Zhuang brocade. Hemp thread is characterized by roughness and toughness, which is suitable for making thick and durable brocade. In the Zhuang area, hemp thread is often used to make thick brocade in winter, such as quilt tops and bed sheets. The use of hemp thread not only increases the practicality of brocade, but also reflects the Zhuang people's full utilization of and respect for natural materials.

To summarize, the raw materials of Zhuang brocade mainly include cotton thread, silk thread and hemp thread. The choice of these raw materials is not only

closely related to the geographical environment, climatic conditions and cultural traditions in which the Zhuang people live, but also reflects their superb skills in the production of rival crafts and their pursuit of a better life.

2.3.3 Weaving

Zhuang brocade, as an important part of traditional Chinese culture, carries rich national history and cultural connotations. Its unique weaving techniques and exquisite pattern designs not only reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Zhuang people, but also demonstrate the high level of Chinese traditional craftsmanship. In this paper, the weaving technique of Zhuang brocade will be introduced in detail, in order to better inherit and develop this national treasure.

The weaving tools of Zhuang brocade mainly include the traditional bamboo cage machine and the modern platoon machine. The bamboo cage machine consists of five parts: body, yarn loading, yarn lifting, jacquard and beating, and its unique structure and easy operation make it suitable for home workshop production. (Fan,2019) While the platoon machine is a modernized weaving equipment, which greatly improves the weaving efficiency.

In terms of materials, Zhuang brocade mainly uses natural fibers such as cotton threads and silk threads as warp and weft threads, which are soft, breathable and skin-friendly, and also have good dyeing properties, making the brocade colorful and durable. The weaving process of Zhuang brocade mainly consists of four steps: drawing the warp, loading the machine, picking the flowers and knotting the book and weaving. First of all, the warp threads are drawn in accordance with a certain pattern and quantity, so as to prepare for the subsequent weaving work. Then, the warp threads are loaded into the loom and the tension is adjusted to ensure stability during the weaving process. Next, the use of picking flowers knotting skills, the design of the pattern into a specific weaving instructions, which is the key link in the Zhuang brocade weaving. Finally, the weaving is carried out according to the instructions, forming exquisite patterns and textures through the interweaving of warp and weft threads. (Xu,2016)

In the process of weaving, Zhuang brocade also focuses on the use of color and contrast. Commonly used colors include blue, black, red and other solid colors, which are bright and contrasting, making the brocade pattern more vivid and distinct. At the same time, Zhuang brocade is also good at using gradient, symmetry and other design techniques, making the pattern in the overall harmony and unity of beauty.

The designs of Zhuang brocade are rich and varied, and there are more than 20 kinds of common patterns, such as two dragons playing with pearls, back pattern, water pattern, cloud pattern, flowers, animals, etc. These patterns are not only beautiful and generous, but also have profound meanings. These patterns are not only beautiful and generous, but also have far-reaching meanings, reflecting the Zhuang

people's love and yearning for nature and life. For example, the "Two Dragons Playing with Pearls" pattern symbolizes auspiciousness and unity and harmony, while the "Back Pattern" implies continuity and endlessness. (Xu, 2016)

In addition, the pattern design of Zhuang brocade is also deeply influenced by national culture. The Zhuang people have formed unique aesthetic concepts and philosophical thoughts in their long-term production life, which are fully reflected in the brocade patterns. Therefore, studying the pattern design of Zhuang brocade can not only appreciate its aesthetic value, but also gain a deeper understanding of the connotation and essence of Zhuang ethnic culture.

As a unique traditional craft, the weaving technique and pattern design of Zhuang brocade reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Zhuang people. Through in-depth understanding and research of the weaving techniques and cultural connotations of Zhuang brocade, we can better inherit and carry forward this national treasure, so that more people can understand and appreciate the charm of traditional Chinese culture. At the same time, it also provides valuable inspiration and reference for modern craft design and innovation.

2.3.4 Color

Zhuang brocade, a deeply accumulated traditional craft, has become a bright pearl of Chinese traditional culture with its brilliant colors and exquisite pattern designs. Color plays a pivotal role in Zhuang brocade, which is not only a visual enjoyment, but also a carrier of Zhuang history, culture and national emotion. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the color art of Zhuang brocade in depth, revealing the cultural connotation and aesthetic value behind it.

The colors of Zhuang brocade are bright and layered, and the commonly used colors are red, yellow, blue, green, black and white. These colors are not chosen arbitrarily, but contain deep cultural connotations and national emotions. Red symbolizes passion, good luck and happiness; yellow represents the land and harvest; blue signifies the vastness of the sky and the ocean; green symbolizes life and hope; black and white have a mysterious and holy meaning in Zhuang culture (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum, 1985).

In Zhuang brocade, the use of color is both bold and delicate. Brocade artists are good at using contrasting and adjacent colors to create visual impact, and at the same time achieve harmony and unity of the picture through gradation and transition of colors. This skill of using colors not only shows the aesthetic pursuit of the Zhuang people, but also reflects their deep sense of nature and life.

Color in Zhuang brocade is not only a visual element, but also a cultural symbol. Each color carries specific cultural connotation and historical background. For example, red color is closely associated with festivity and auspiciousness in Zhuang

culture and is often used in brocade for weddings, festivals and other occasions; while yellow color represents the land and farming culture, reflecting the Zhuang people's reverence and gratitude for nature (Fan, 2016).

In addition, the colors in Zhuang brocade are often associated with national history, myths and legends and religious beliefs. Some specific color and pattern combinations have become the unique mark of Zhuang culture, conveying the identity and emotional belonging of the nation. These colors and patterns not only decorate people's living space, but also pass on the history and culture of the Zhuang people in an invisible way.

2.3.5 Common pattern types

Zhuang brocade is famous for its colorful patterns and exquisite craftsmanship, which are not only the crystallization of the wisdom of the Zhuang people, but also a reflection of their life and aesthetic concepts. In the patterns of Zhuang brocade, you can see a large number of natural elements, animal images, myths and legends, as well as scenes of daily life, which are not only decorative, but also contain deep cultural connotations.

Natural elements are an important part of Zhuang brocade patterns, commonly including the sun, moon and stars, landscape and clouds, flowers, plants and trees. These patterns often appear in abstract or figurative forms, symbolizing the Zhuang people's reverence and worship of nature. For example, the patterns of sun, moon and stars symbolize light and hope, while the patterns of mountains, water and clouds express the mystery and magnificence of nature. These patterns are not only decorative, but also reflect the Zhuang people's love and reverence for nature. (Lu,2017)

Animal figures are also important elements in Zhuang brocade patterns, commonly including dragon and phoenix, unicorn, mandarin ducks, butterflies, fish and insects. These animal figures often appear in exaggerated or deformed forms, symbolizing good luck, happiness and a better future. For example, the dragon and phoenix motifs symbolize good luck and happiness, while the unicorn motifs imply auspiciousness and good fortune. These patterns not only have artistic value, but also reflect the Zhuang people's love and reverence for animals. (Lu, 2017)

Myths and legends are an important part of Zhuang culture and one of the important sources of Zhuang brocade patterns. In Zhuang brocade, a large number of myths and legends can be seen, such as Fuxi Nuwa, Pangu opening the world, Houyi shooting the sun and so on. These patterns often appear in figurative or abstract forms, symbolizing the Zhuang people's love and inheritance of myths and legends. These motifs not only have historical value and cultural significance, but also reflect the unique understanding and interpretation of myths and legends by the Zhuang people. (Lu,2017)

Daily life scenes are also one of the important contents of Zhuang brocade motifs, commonly including farming, fishing and hunting, weaving, feasting and so on. These patterns often appear in realistic or exaggerated forms, reflecting the lifestyle and cultural traditions of the Zhuang people. For example, farming motifs show the quality of hard work and wisdom of the Zhuang people, while fishing and hunting motifs reflect their harmonious symbiotic relationship with nature. These patterns are not only life-like and practical, but also reflect the love and pursuit of life of the Zhuang people. (Lu,2017)

In conclusion, the patterns of Zhuang brocade are rich and diverse, including traditional cultural elements such as natural elements, animal images, myths and legends, as well as real-life elements such as scenes of daily life. These patterns are not only decorative and artistic, but also contain deep cultural connotation and historical value. They are not only the crystallization of the wisdom of the Zhuang people and the embodiment of their aesthetic concepts, but also the treasures of traditional Chinese ethnic crafts and an important part of the cultural heritage.

2.3.6 Current status of transmission

Zhuang brocade, a national handicraft carrying deep historical and cultural connotations, is now facing the challenge of inheritance and development. Under the impact of the wave of modernization, traditional handicrafts have gradually lost their market, and brocade weaving skills are at risk of being lost. However, as an important part of intangible cultural heritage, the protection and inheritance of Zhuang brocade weaving is crucial.

At present, the inheritance of Zhuang brocade weaving mainly relies on the old generation of brocade weavers. These artists pass the brocade weaving skills from generation to generation through oral transmission. However, with the passing away of the old artists, the younger generation's interest in the brocade weaving skill has gradually waned, and there has been a gap in the inheritance. To cope with this challenge, some local governments and NGOs have begun to take measures, such as setting up an inheritor system and organizing training courses on brocade weaving skills, to train new inheritors (Huang, 2019). These measures have alleviated the pressure of transmission faults to a certain extent, but they still need to be further strengthened.

The market demand for Zhuang brocade is gradually shrinking and industrialization is low. This is mainly attributed to changes in modern lifestyles and the diversification of consumer aesthetics. In order to promote the industrial development of Zhuang brocade, some local governments and enterprises have begun to try to combine traditional handicrafts with modern design concepts, and develop brocade products that are more in line with modern aesthetics and practical needs. At the same time, the popularity and influence of Zhuang brocade has been enhanced by

organizing brocade competitions, brocade cultural tourism and other activities (Su, 2020). These efforts help to broaden the market space of Zhuang brocade and promote its industrial development.

In terms of cultural protection, some local governments and cultural institutions have begun to pay attention to the digital recording and organization of Zhuang brocade weaving. By adopting modern technical means, such as digital scanning and three-dimensional modeling, brocade weaving techniques are recorded and preserved for better inheritance and development (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum, 2020). At the same time, inheritors and designers are encouraged to create innovative designs based on the inheritance of traditional skills, so that Zhuang brocade weaving can be better integrated into modern life. This combination of inheritance and innovation helps to maintain the vigor and vitality of Zhuang brocade.

In recent years, the popularity and influence of Zhuang brocade has gradually increased in the international arena. Some local governments and cultural organizations have actively carried out international exchanges and cooperation to display Zhuang brocade to audiences in more countries and regions. These exchanges and cooperation not only promote the international development of Zhuang brocade, but also provide more opportunities for inheritors and designers to learn and learn from each other (China Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, 2021).

Although the inheritance of Zhuang brocade is facing many challenges, it is also pregnant with new opportunities and hopes. Through the joint efforts of the government, society and enterprises, the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade is expected to come out of the dilemma and take on new vitality and vigor. In the future, we should continue to pay attention to and support the inheritance of Zhuang brocade, strengthen international exchanges and cooperation, and promote its industrialization, so that this national treasure can shine more brightly in the new historical period.

2.4 Knowledge about the Relevant Laws and Policies and Regulations

Guangxi Zhuang brocade, approved by the State Council of the People's Republic of China on May 20, 2006, was included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage list, No. VII-20, which is also the first batch of intangible cultural heritage to be included in the list of safeguarded intangible cultural heritage after the State Council of China issued the "Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage".

(State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2006) Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to the various traditional cultural expressions that have been handed down from generation to generation by peoples and are considered to be part of their cultural heritage, as well as the physical objects and places associated with the

traditional cultural expressions. These traditional cultural expressions include, but are not limited to:

Traditional oral literature and the language that is its vehicle.

Traditional arts, calligraphy, music, dance, theater, opera and acrobatics.

Traditional skills, medicine and calendars.

Traditional rituals, festivals and other folklore.

Traditional sports and amusements.

Other intangible cultural heritage.

In China, the intangible cultural heritage carries a long history and deep cultural connotations, and is a valuable cultural asset of the Chinese nation. They have become part of the cultural identity of specific groups through transmission from generation to generation and continuous evolution. At the same time, these intangible cultural heritages are in danger of being lost, making the protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritages a top priority.

In addition, the relevant legal provisions shall apply to objects and places that are part of the intangible cultural heritage and that are cultural objects. Inheritors play an important role in the transmission and development of the intangible cultural heritage, and with their superhuman talent and spirituality, they store, master and carry the cultural traditions and exquisite skills of the relevant categories of the intangible cultural heritage, which is a living treasure trove of the intangible cultural heritage.

The following content will introduce the current laws and regulations related to Zhuangjin culture in China at the national level and local regulations and policies.

National Level

2.4.1 National level

In an in-depth study of the Zhuang brocade, it is necessary to understand and emphasize the development of the laws and policies related to it in chronological order. These laws and policies not only provide a solid legal and policy foundation for the protection and inheritance of Zhuang brocade, but also reflect the continued strengthening and deepening of the State's efforts to protect the intangible cultural heritage.⁹ The issuance of documents related to the document has enabled the implementation of the protection of intangible cultural heritage in China.

2.4.1.1 Circular of the state council on strengthening the protection of cultural heritage issued in 2005

The specifics of the State Council Circular on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage (State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2005) include, inter alia, the following aspects:

The document specifies the guiding ideology for strengthening the protection of cultural heritage, which is to be guided by Deng Xiaoping Theory and the Important Thought of the "Three Represents", and to comprehensively implement and realize the scientific concept of development. The basic guideline is "protection first, rescue first, rational utilization, and strengthening management". The overall goal is that by 2010, a relatively complete cultural heritage protection system will have been initially established, and the protection of cultural heritage will have been significantly improved. By 2015, a relatively comprehensive cultural heritage protection system will have been basically formed, and cultural heritage of historical, cultural and scientific value will have been comprehensively and effectively protected; the protection of cultural heritage will be deeply rooted in people's hearts and become a conscious action of society as a whole.

Effective protection of cultural relics. The Circular emphasizes the need to strengthen the protection of important cultural relics, especially large sites, and to implement a number of key cultural relics protection and salvage protection facility construction projects. The system for the protection of cultural relics will be improved and the management of the cultural relics market will be strengthened.

Actively promoting the protection of intangible cultural heritage. The document requires that a census of intangible cultural heritage be carried out in earnest, and that protection and rescue programs be formulated as a matter of urgency. It strengthens the protection of ethnic minority cultural heritage and cultural ecological zones, and focuses on supporting the protection of intangible cultural heritage in ethnic minority areas.

Effectively improve the preservation of cultural relics. The Circular points out that it is necessary to implement a strategy driven by conservation projects, and to concentrate on the conservation of all kinds of cultural heritage. The protection of historical and cultural cities (neighborhoods, villages and towns) will be strengthened, and the preservation of cultural heritage and the environment will be improved.

The document emphasizes the need to carry out an intangible cultural heritage census in earnest, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding and grasp of the types, quantities, distribution, living environments, safeguarding status and problems of the intangible cultural heritage resources of all ethnic groups in all regions. Intangible cultural heritage safeguarding plans will be formulated, and endangered intangible cultural heritage of great value will be rescued and safeguarded. A system of lists of intangible cultural heritage has been established, and a system of

safeguarding intangible cultural heritage with Chinese characteristics is gradually being developed.

The document requires people's governments at all levels and relevant departments to place the protection of cultural heritage on their important agendas and to incorporate it into economic and social development plans and urban and rural planning. A sound system of responsibility and accountability for cultural heritage protection is to be established. Give full play to the role of relevant academic institutions, colleges and universities, enterprises and institutions, social organizations and other parties to jointly carry out cultural heritage protection work.

The issuance of the Circular of the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Cultural Heritage marks the formal entry of a whole new phase in the protection of China's cultural heritage. The document emphasizes the urgency and importance of cultural heritage protection, and lays a solid foundation for the subsequent formulation and implementation of regulations related to the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

2.4.1.2 Interim measures for the safeguarding and management of national intangible cultural heritage issued in 2006

The specifics of the Interim Measures for the Safeguarding and Management of National Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, 2006) include the following aspects:

Definition and principles of safeguarding: National intangible cultural heritage refers to all items included in the list of national intangible cultural heritage approved and published by the State Council. The principles of safeguarding are "protection as the mainstay, rescue first, rational utilization, inheritance and development", and adherence to the protection of authenticity and wholeness.

Management responsibilities: The cultural administrative department of the State Council is responsible for organizing, coordinating and supervising the protection of national intangible cultural heritage nationwide, while the cultural administrative departments of the provincial people's governments assume the same responsibilities in their respective administrative areas. The cultural administrative department where the project is located is specifically responsible for the protection of the project.

Safeguarding units and representative bearers: Each national intangible cultural heritage item shall have a safeguarding unit, which shall be equipped with representative bearers, the ability to implement safeguarding plans, and a place to carry out inheritance and display activities. The safeguarding unit needs to comprehensively collect relevant information about the program, provide the necessary conditions for its transmission, and actively carry out exhibition activities. The representative inheritor must have a complete mastery of the skills of the project,

be recognized as representative and influential, and actively carry out inheritance activities.

Protection of physical materials and cultural sites: Establishment of a national database of intangible cultural heritage and possible museums or exhibition sites. The cultural sites on which the project is based will be delineated and protected as a whole. At the same time, the destruction and loss of physical materials will be prevented.

Utilization and confidentiality: When national intangible cultural heritage is utilized for creation, development and other activities, its originality and cultural connotation shall be respected. Items containing state secrets or commercial secrets shall be protected in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Donations and rewards: Units and individuals are encouraged to donate physical materials or funds for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. Units and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to safeguarding will be recognized and rewarded.

Legal responsibility: For unauthorized change of project name or protection unit, destruction of cultural places, misappropriation of protection funds, etc., the relevant responsible persons shall be investigated for administrative or criminal responsibility according to law.

Overall, the Administrative Measures provide a comprehensive legal framework and operational guidelines for the safeguarding of national intangible cultural heritage. Detailed provisions and explanations are provided, ranging from definitions and principles of safeguarding to specific management responsibilities, the identification of safeguarding units and representative bearers, the protection of physical materials and cultural venues, provisions on utilization and confidentiality, mechanisms for donations and rewards, and legal responsibilities.

2.4.1.3 2011 law of the People's Republic of China on intangible cultural heritage

Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage (Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, 2011) The following is an explanation of the content of the law:

The Law first clarifies the importance of safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage, stipulating that the people's governments at or above the county level are obliged to strengthen publicity for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in order to raise the awareness of safeguarding in society as a whole. At the same time, the State encourages and supports the participation of citizens, legal persons and other organizations in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

With regard to the investigation of intangible cultural heritage, the law provides in detail for the subject, procedures and requirements of the investigation. The

people's governments at or above the county level shall organize surveys of intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the needs of protection and preservation work, and the competent cultural authorities shall be responsible for the surveys. The investigation process shall identify, record and archive the intangible cultural heritage, and establish a sound mechanism for sharing information on the investigation. In addition, the law provides for the preservation of physical pictures and information obtained in the course of the investigation, as well as the means of public access.

In order to better safeguard the intangible cultural heritage, the law provides for a system of establishing lists of representative items of intangible cultural heritage at the national and local levels. The establishment of the lists is subject to procedures such as recommendation, evaluation, public notification and approval for publication, to ensure that the selected items have significant historical, literary, artistic and scientific value. At the same time, the law also provides for the formulation of safeguarding plans, the implementation of regional overall safeguarding and other measures to ensure that the intangible cultural heritage on the lists is effectively safeguarded.

With regard to the transmission and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, the law encourages and supports the development of relevant transmission and dissemination activities, including the identification of representative transmitters, the provision of transmission sites and financial assistance. Representative transmitters shall fulfill their obligations to carry out transmission activities and train successors, and if they fail to do so without justifiable reasons, the competent cultural authorities may cancel their status as representative transmitters. In addition, the law stipulates the duties of schools, news media and public cultural institutions in the protection and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, in order to promote the wide dissemination and popularization of intangible cultural heritage.

In the section on legal responsibilities, the law specifies the legal responsibilities of relevant departments and staff in the protection of intangible cultural heritage. Acts such as negligence, abuse of power and favoritism will be punished in accordance with the law. At the same time, civil liability shall be borne in accordance with the law for the destruction of objects and places that are part of the intangible cultural heritage; if such acts constitute a violation of public security administration, public security administration penalties shall be imposed in accordance with the law. Violations of the law by organizations and individuals outside the country will also be punished in accordance with the law.

The by-laws provide for a reference method for the establishment of a local representative list of items of intangible cultural heritage, i.e. the people's government at the provincial level may formulate a specific method for the establishment of a local representative list of items of intangible cultural heritage with reference to the

relevant provisions of this Law. This provision provides a legal basis and guiding direction for the safeguarding of local intangible cultural heritage.

2.4.1.4 The revitalization plan for traditional crafts in China was released in 2017

Revitalization Plan for Chinese Traditional Crafts (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Ministry of Finance, 2017). Chinese traditional crafts are valuable wealth created by the Chinese nation in the process of long-term historical development, containing profound cultural connotations and unique artistic charms. However, with the acceleration of modernization, many traditional crafts are facing problems such as difficulties in inheritance and insufficient market competitiveness. In order to protect and revitalize these traditional crafts, the Chinese Government has formulated a plan for the revitalization of traditional crafts in China.

The objective of the program is to significantly enhance the inheritance and recreation capacity, industry management level and market competitiveness of traditional crafts by 2020, while raising the income of practitioners and promoting employment in urban and rural areas. Through the implementation of the program, it aims to promote the inheritance and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture in contemporary society and enhance cultural confidence.

The main task is to establish a national catalog for the revitalization of traditional crafts: on the basis of the list of representative items of the national intangible cultural heritage, traditional craft items with a certain inheritance base and production scale, which have development prospects and help to promote employment, will be screened and a national catalog for the revitalization of traditional crafts will be established. This will help to focus efforts on supporting the inheritance and development of these projects.

Expanding the ranks of inheritors of intangible cultural heritage: A reasonable echelon has been formed by encouraging young and middle-aged inheritors with excellent skills to declare and enter the ranks of representative inheritors of representative items of intangible cultural heritage at all levels. At the same time, support is provided for traditional crafts transfer activities, such as apprenticeship and teaching, to mobilize the younger generation to engage in traditional crafts.

Strengthening the construction of disciplines and specialties related to traditional crafts and theoretical research: support colleges, universities and vocational schools to offer specialties and courses related to traditional crafts, and train professional and technical personnel and theoretical researchers. At the same time, colleges, universities and research institutions are encouraged to set up research bases and key laboratories for traditional crafts, and to strengthen the excavation, recording and organization of traditional crafts.

Improving the design, production level and overall quality of traditional craft products: Enhancing the quality and market competitiveness of traditional craft products through the introduction of modern management systems, improved design, better materials and improved production. Encourage practitioners of traditional crafts to sign their names or use handmade logos on their works or products, and cultivate well-known brands of traditional crafts with national characteristics.

Broadening the promotion, display and sales channels for traditional craft products: building more display and trading platforms for traditional crafts through the establishment of display and sales venues, and the organization of fairs and exhibitions. At the same time, commercial websites and relevant specialized websites are encouraged to set up online sales platforms to help promote traditional craft products.

Strengthening coordination: Relevant government departments at all levels should actively explore effective ways to revitalize traditional crafts in conjunction with related efforts. At the same time, extensive training in handicraft skills for all types of people is being carried out to encourage them to engage in the production of traditional crafts.

Implementing support policies: Utilizing existing funding channels to support projects related to traditional crafts. At the same time, the construction of infrastructure for displaying and practicing traditional crafts has been incorporated into relevant planning and given support. Qualified traditional craft enterprises can also enjoy preferential tax policies, etc.

Strengthening financial services: Explore the establishment of a system of guidelines for the assessment of intangible assets of traditional craft enterprises and support the development of their financing. Encourage financial institutions to develop financial products and services suited to the characteristics of traditional craft enterprises in order to strengthen their investment and financing support and services.

Encouragement of social participation: social forces are encouraged to set up traditional craft enterprises and build exhibition and training venues and public service platforms. At the same time, activities such as publicity, training, seminars and exchanges and cooperation are organized to promote the dissemination and development of traditional crafts in contemporary society.

In short, the Chinese Traditional Crafts Revitalization Plan is a systematic and comprehensive project aimed at protecting and revitalizing the outstanding traditional crafts cultural heritage of the Chinese nation and promoting its inheritance and development in contemporary society.

2.4.1.5 Opinions on the implementation of the project for the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture issued in 2017

The Opinions on the Implementation of the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture was issued in 2017 (General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, General Office of the State Council, 2017)

The General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council recently jointly issued the Opinions on the Implementation of the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture, which aims to promote the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture and to build a strong socialist cultural country. The Opinions emphasize the importance and overall requirements of Chinese outstanding traditional culture, and put forward the guiding ideology, basic principles and overall objectives to promote the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture.

First of all, the opinion clarifies the importance of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Chinese culture has a long and glorious history, has accumulated the deepest spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation, and represents the unique spiritual identity of the Chinese nation. It is the rich nourishment for the continuous growth and development of the Chinese nation, the fertile cultural soil for the rooting of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and plays an important role in the continuation and development of Chinese civilization and the advancement of human civilization. Therefore, the implementation of the project for the transmission and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture is a major strategic task in building a strong socialist cultural power.

Secondly, the opinion puts forward the guiding ideology for the implementation of the project. It adheres to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Important Thought of the Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, and deeply implements the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of important speeches and the new concepts and new ideas and new strategies of governance. At the same time, it adheres to the people-centered orientation of its work, takes socialist core values as its guide, adheres to creative transformation and innovative development, and continuously enhances the vitality and influence of the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

In terms of implementation principles, the opinions emphasize five points: first, firmly grasp the forward direction of advanced socialist culture, and adhere to the road of socialist cultural development with Chinese characteristics; second, adhere to the people-centered work orientation, focusing on cultural inculcation and practical upbringing; third, adhere to creative transformation and innovative development, and continue to give new connotations of the times and modern forms of expression; fourth, adhere to exchanges and mutual learning, openness and inclusiveness, and absorb and learn from the outstanding achievements of foreign civilizations; fifth, adhere to overall coordination and formation of synergy, and strengthen the leadership

of the Party to form an institutional mechanism and social environment conducive to the inheritance and development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture. Fourth, adhere to exchange and mutual understanding, openness and tolerance, and absorb and learn from the outstanding achievements of foreign civilizations; fifth, adhere to the overall coordination and formation of synergy, strengthen the leadership of the Party, and form a systematic mechanism and social environment conducive to the inheritance and development of the outstanding traditional Chinese culture.

Finally, the opinion puts forward the overall goal. By 2025, a system for the transmission and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture will have basically taken shape, and important results will have been achieved in research and interpretation, education and popularization, protection and inheritance, innovation and development, and dissemination and exchange. The realization of this goal requires the joint efforts and participation of governments at all levels, all sectors of society and the general public.

In order to realize this goal, the opinions also put forward a series of specific tasks and measures. These include strengthening the research and interpretation of Chinese outstanding traditional culture, promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese culture, strengthening the popularization of Chinese outstanding traditional culture, protecting and passing on cultural heritage, and strengthening communication and exchange. These tasks and measures are aimed at promoting the inheritance and development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture, enabling more people to understand and identify with Chinese culture, and enhancing cultural confidence and cultural self-awareness.

In conclusion, the issuance of the Opinions on the Implementation of the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture signifies the great importance China attaches to and the active promotion of the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture. The implementation of this project will give a strong impetus to the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture and provide strong support for the construction of a strong socialist cultural country. At the same time, it also requires the active participation and support of governments at all levels, all sectors of society, and the general public to jointly promote the new luster of Chinese outstanding traditional culture in the new era. Through the in-depth implementation of the guiding ideology, basic principles and overall objectives put forward in the Opinions, we are expected to achieve important results in the inheritance and development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture in the next few years, and contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2.4.1.6 The measures for the recognition and management of representative inheritors of national intangible cultural heritage were issued in 2017

Measures for the Recognition and Management of Representative Inheritors of National Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2019). Intangible cultural heritage is an important part of Chinese civilization, which carries a nation's historical memory, cultural identity and spiritual support. In order to protect, pass on and develop these valuable cultural heritages, China has formulated a series of laws, regulations and policy measures. One important system is the Measures for the Recognition and Administration of Representative Inheritors of National-level Intangible Cultural Heritage, which aims to standardize the recognition and administration of representative inheritors of intangible cultural heritage and to promote the protection and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

The identification of representative bearers of national-level intangible cultural heritage shall adhere to the principles of openness, fairness and impartiality, and strictly carry out the procedures of declaration, examination, evaluation, publicity, validation and announcement. At the same time, the declarant must meet certain conditions, such as being engaged in the inheritance practice of the intangible cultural heritage for a long period of time, mastering the knowledge and core techniques of the representative items of the national intangible cultural heritage that he or she has inherited, being representative of a specific field, and having a greater influence in a certain region.

To declare a representative bearer of national intangible cultural heritage, application materials shall be truthfully submitted to the competent department of culture and tourism where the representative items of national intangible cultural heritage are located. After receiving the application materials, the competent department of culture and tourism shall organize experts to review and report at each level. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism shall review the application materials received and enter the evaluation process if they meet the requirements; if they do not meet the requirements, the materials shall be returned with reasons. During the evaluation process, the expert evaluation group and evaluation committee shall be organized to carry out preliminary evaluation and deliberation, put forward the recommended candidates and make a public announcement. After the publicity period, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism shall finalize the list of representative bearers of national intangible cultural heritage based on the deliberations of the evaluation committee and the results of the publicity and make it public.

For recognized representative bearers of national intangible cultural heritage, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism will establish files and update relevant information in a timely manner. At the same time, the competent departments of culture and tourism at all levels will take a series of measures to support the transmission activities of the inheritors, such as providing the necessary places for transmission, granting appropriate financial support, and carrying out training and research. In

addition, inheritors will be encouraged to carry out transmission and dissemination activities and participate in social welfare activities to promote the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage.

The implementation of the Measures for the Recognition and Administration of Representative Inheritors of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level is of great significance and value for the safeguarding and transmission of the intangible cultural heritage. Firstly, it helps to improve the transmission system of intangible cultural heritage and enhance the survivability of intangible cultural heritage. Through the identification and management of representative bearers, it can ensure the continuation and development of the inheritance of traditional skills and culture. Secondly, it helps to respect the main status and rights of the inheritors and improve the capacity of inheritance practice. By giving appropriate support and protection to the inheritors, it can stimulate their enthusiasm and creativity in passing on the intangible cultural heritage. Finally, it helps to enhance the sense of identity of communities and groups, and promote cultural diversity and the exchange and mutual understanding of human civilization. Through the inheritors' transmission activities and social participation, more people can understand and recognize the value and significance of intangible cultural heritage and enhance national pride and cultural self-confidence.

In summary, the Measures for the Recognition and Administration of Representative Inheritors of the Intangible Cultural Heritage at the National Level is an important system for the safeguarding of China's intangible cultural heritage. By standardizing the identification and management procedures, supporting the transmission activities of the bearers, and promoting the transmission and development of the intangible cultural heritage, the Measures provide a strong guarantee for the protection and transmission of the intangible cultural heritage. However, with the rapid development of society and the constant evolution of culture, the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage still faces many challenges and difficulties.

2.4.1.7 Measures for the management of funds for the safeguarding of the national intangible cultural heritage issued in 2022

Measures for the Management of National Funds for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2022)

The intangible cultural heritage, as an important part of the long history and splendid culture of the Chinese nation, carries the memory and wisdom of the nation, and is an important foundation for connecting national emotions and maintaining national unity. In order to strengthen the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, the central government has set up the National Fund for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage (hereinafter referred to as the

"Safeguarding Fund"). The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe the main contents of the Administrative Measures for the Safeguarding Funds for the National Intangible Cultural Heritage, with a view to raising public awareness of the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage and promoting the rational use and management of the safeguarding funds.

The safeguarding fund is a special fund set up by the central financial administration and used exclusively to support the management and safeguarding of the national intangible cultural heritage. Its annual budget is approved in accordance with the overall plan for the safeguarding of the national intangible cultural heritage, the annual work plan and the national financial resources. The duration of the implementation of the safeguarding funds is determined in accordance with the reform plan for the division of financial authority and expenditure responsibility between the central and local governments in the field of public culture, and the policies for safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage.

The management and use of protection funds follows the provisions of relevant national laws and regulations, financial rules and regulations, and the Administrative Measures, and is subject to the supervision of financial departments as well as the supervision and inspection of auditing, culture and tourism departments. Financial and cultural and tourism authorities at all levels have different responsibilities in the management and use of protection funds, including data review, budget arrangement, use of funds and performance management.

The scope of expenditure of the safeguarding funds mainly includes two categories, namely organizational management fees and safeguarding subsidies. Organizational and management fees are used for expenses incurred in organizing and carrying out safeguarding and management of intangible cultural heritage, such as investigation and research, planning and preparation, publicity and publication, consultation and evaluation, communication and training, and database construction. Safeguarding subsidies are used to subsidize the expenditures incurred by representative projects of national intangible cultural heritage, representative inheritors, and national cultural and ecological reserves to carry out safeguarding and inheritance activities, specifically including the subsidies for the protection of representative projects, the subsidies for representative inheritors, and the subsidies for the construction of national cultural and ecological reserves, and so on.

The Administrative Measures clearly stipulate the scope of expenditures for which safeguarding funds may not be used, including expenditures unrelated to the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, expenditures for fines, donations, sponsorships and investments, debt repayment and infrastructure construction, publication of personal monographs, salary expenditures of staff within the establishment and expenditures for retirement fees of retirees, as well as other

expenditures prohibited by State regulations. These restrictions ensure the earmarking of conservation funds and improve the efficiency of their use.

Central-level project funds are an important part of the protection funds, and their allocation and management follow the central departmental budget management system. The relevant central departments, based on the annual central departmental budgeting notice, representative project protection needs, workload and other factors, put forward project budget applications and performance targets, which are submitted to the Ministry of Finance after review and approval by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The Ministry of Finance, based on the application of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the financial resources of the central government, approves and issues project budgets and performance targets in accordance with the provisions of departmental budget management. Central departments are required to organize and implement the budgets in strict accordance with the approved budgets, strengthen budgetary constraints, enhance financial expenditure management, and ensure that project funds are earmarked for specific purposes and that performance objectives are achieved.

Central subsidies to localities are divided into two categories: subsidies for key projects and subsidies for general projects. Subsidies for key projects are mainly used for the construction of national cultural ecological protection zones, compliance protection of projects selected for UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list, and projects for which the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Finance have jointly determined the implementation plan; subsidies for general projects are used for other representative projects, representative transmitters, records of representative transmitters, and other intangible cultural heritage protection projects. The central government allocates local subsidies on the basis of factors such as the performance of local safeguarding work, project demand and local financial resources, and issues them to local finances through special transfer payments. Local finances are required to use and manage the subsidy funds in accordance with the requirements of the central government and relevant regulations to ensure the effective use of the funds and the realization of performance objectives.

The introduction of the Measures for the Administration of Funds for the Safeguarding of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage has provided strong institutional safeguards and financial support for strengthening the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. By standardizing the management and use of safeguarding funds, clarifying the scope of expenditure and restrictions on their use, and strengthening budgetary constraints and performance management, it will help to improve the effectiveness of the use and management of safeguarding funds, and to promote the sustained and healthy development of the cause of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, it is also necessary for the whole

society to make joint efforts to raise public awareness and participation in the protection of intangible cultural heritage, so as to jointly guard our cultural treasures.

2.4.2 Policies and regulations at the local level

After an in-depth discussion of the policies and regulations at the national level on the identification and management of representative bearers of intangible cultural heritage, it is not difficult to find that these regulations not only provide a solid legal guarantee for the inheritance and promotion of the outstanding traditional Chinese culture, but also provide an important guiding principle for the formulation of local policies and regulations. Next, we turn our attention to the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region to explore how the region can formulate and implement policies and regulations related to intangible cultural heritage in the light of the local actual situation, so as to further protect and pass on the rich and colorful resources of intangible cultural heritage in this region.

The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as one of the important birthplaces of the diverse cultures of the Chinese nation, possesses rich resources of intangible cultural heritage. In order to effectively protect and pass on these precious cultural heritages, the Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region has formulated a series of policies and regulations with local characteristics in accordance with the relevant national laws and regulations and in the light of local realities. These laws and regulations not only reflect the great importance the state attaches to the protection of intangible cultural heritage, but also reflect the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region's unique understanding of and firm confidence in local culture. Next, we will read two important policies and regulations of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in this regard one by one, and feel the cultural value and significance of the times behind them.

2.4.2.1 Regulations on the protection of traditional ethnic and traditional culture of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region issued in 2016

Regulations on the Protection of Traditional Culture of Ethnic Minorities in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Standing Committee of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region People's Congress, 2016). The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as a multi-ethnic region in China, possesses rich resources of intangible cultural heritage. In order to strengthen the protection and transmission of these valuable cultural heritages, the autonomous region passed the Regulations on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) in 2016, aiming to ensure that the authenticity, wholeness, and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage are maintained through legal means.

Definition and scope: The Regulations first clarify the definition and scope of the intangible cultural heritage, which includes traditional oral literature, fine arts, music, dance, drama, opera, acrobatics, performing arts, performing arts, medicines, calendars, rituals, festivals, sports and amusements, traditional folk architecture, costumes, vessels and utensils, as well as documents and genealogical records related to traditional cultural expressions. These forms of culture reflect the wisdom and creativity of the various ethnic groups that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Principles of protection: In the protection work, the Regulations emphasize the importance of authenticity, wholeness and inheritance, adhere to the principles of government-led, social participation, scientific planning and step-by-step implementation, and carry out the guidelines of protection as the mainstay, salvage as the first priority, rational utilization and inheritance and development. At the same time, it explicitly prohibits the use of intangible cultural heritage in a distorted or derogatory manner, ensuring that its cultural and historical value is not jeopardized.

Government responsibilities: The people's governments at and above the county level play a key role in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. The Regulations require the government to strengthen its leadership in safeguarding, incorporate it into national economic and social development planning, and establish and improve work coordination and funding mechanisms. In addition, the government is required to support the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in specific areas in terms of projects, funding, infrastructure development and talent training.

Sectoral responsibilities: The competent cultural departments of the people's governments at or above the county level are responsible for specific protection work, including the formulation of protection plans, the organization of surveys, the identification of representative projects, and the management of protection funds. Other departments such as development and reform, industry and information technology, and education are also required to participate in the protection work within their respective scope of responsibilities. Township (township) people's governments and street offices are responsible for assisting the competent cultural authorities in their protection work.

Social participation: In addition to the efforts of the Government, the Regulations also encourage and support the participation of institutions of higher learning, scientific research institutes and social organizations in the research of intangible cultural heritage, the training of specialists, and the raising of the scientific level of safeguarding. At the same time, the media, such as radio, television, newspapers and the Internet, are also called upon to carry out publicity to popularize knowledge of intangible cultural heritage and raise awareness of safeguarding in society as a whole.

The promulgation of the Regulations on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region marks an important step in the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Guangxi. The Regulations not only clarify the principles, scope and specific measures for protection, but also define the responsibilities of the Government and various departments, ensuring that protection work is carried out in an orderly manner. At the same time, by encouraging social participation and media publicity, it further raises the awareness of and attaches importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage throughout society.

Intangible cultural heritage is an important part of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation and is the crystallization of national wisdom and creativity. Protecting these valuable cultural heritages is of great significance to the inheritance and development of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. The implementation of the Regulations on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region will provide strong legal safeguards for the protection of intangible cultural heritage in Guangxi and even in the whole country, and will push the cause of cultural heritage protection forward.

2.4.2.2 Opinions of the people's government of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on strengthening the protection of intangible cultural heritage in the region issued in 2016

Opinions of the People's Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Region (Chen Yongshuang. 2022). In response to the national call for the protection of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), Guangxi recently issued the Opinions on the Implementation of Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Guangxi. Guided by Xi Jinping's thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, the opinion emphasizes the rescue protection, rational utilization and inheritance development of ICH to ensure that ICH is comprehensively and effectively protected in the new era.

Specifically, Guangxi has set two stages of goals. First, by 2025, representative items of non-legacy should be effectively protected, the working system should be scientific and standardized, and the sense of participation, access and recognition of non-legacy by all ethnic groups should be significantly enhanced. The role of non-heritage in poverty alleviation, industrial revitalization, rural revitalization and the construction of strong cultural and tourism areas should be further highlighted. Secondly, by 2035, non-heritage shall be comprehensively and effectively protected, the vitality of inheritance shall be significantly enhanced, the working system shall be more perfect, and the inheritance system shall be more sound. Non-heritage will become an important force in promoting the sustainable economic and social development of Guangxi, building a magnificent Guangxi and realizing socialist modernization.

In order to realize these goals, the Implementation Opinions have proposed a number of specific measures. Firstly, it is necessary to improve the survey and record system of non-heritage, to get a clear picture of the non-heritage resources in the region, and to promote the integration and sharing of resources. Secondly, it is necessary to improve the representative project system, establish a preparatory list and build a more scientific classification system. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the identification and management of representative inheritors, explore the identification of representative inheritance groups, and strengthen training and inheritance echelon construction. In addition, it is also necessary to promote the construction of cultural ecological protection zones, excavate and build villages, towns and neighborhoods featuring non-heritage, so as to realize the overall protection of non-heritage and the environment in which it is nurtured and developed. In terms of the construction of inheritance experience facilities, it is necessary to support the construction and reconstruction of a number of new non-heritage exhibition and experience centers, and to strive for the inclusion of more projects in the construction of national non-heritage inheritance experience facilities.

In terms of improving the level of protection and inheritance, the Implementation Opinions emphasize the need to formulate differentiated protection measures according to the characteristics of different types of non-heritage. For example, for traditional theater and performing arts such as opera, special inheritance and development plans should be formulated to create masterpieces and cultivate theatrical talents. At the same time, it is necessary to actively integrate into major national strategies, and give full play to the positive role of non-heritage in promoting economic development, urban and rural construction, social governance and improving people's livelihoods. In promoting rational utilization, it is necessary to promote the integration and development of non-heritage with modern service industries and tourism, and to transform non-heritage resources into products and services with local characteristics.

In addition, the Implementation Opinions also emphasized the need to increase the dissemination and popularization of non-heritage. The visibility and influence of non-legacy should be enhanced by broadening communication channels, creating display and communication brands, and carrying out non-legacy activities in schools, communities and scenic spots. At the same time, the protection of non-heritage into the national education system, in primary and secondary schools to open a special course, to strengthen the non-heritage discipline system and professional construction of colleges and universities. Finally, the Implementation Opinions require that party committees and governments at all levels should strengthen organizational leadership, rule of law, fiscal and financial support, talent protection and assessment and evaluation, etc., so as to ensure that the protection of non-heritage is effectively implemented.

In summary, Guangxi has clarified the guiding ideology, working principles and target tasks of the protection of non-heritage through the issuance of the Implementation Opinions, and has put forward specific protection measures and safeguards. This will help promote the comprehensive strengthening and in-depth development of the protection of non-legacy in Guangxi.

2.5 Research Theories

2.5.1 Semiology

Semiotics, also known as the theory of signs, is the study of how meaning is created and communicated through signs, symbols, and language. Founded by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, semiotics explores the process of meaning expression and how symbols represent concepts, objects, or ideas. It delves into the fundamental aspects of communication and how humans use symbols to convey meaning in culture and society. (Saussure, 1916)

The main idea behind semiotics is that signs are the cornerstone of communication and consist of two interrelated parts: the signifier and the signified. The signifier refers to the physical form of the sign, such as a word, sound, image, or gesture, while the signified is the mental concept or meaning associated with that form. Saussure believed that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and based on conventions established in a particular community or culture.

Pierce divided signs into three categories: icon, index, and symbol. This classification system is very useful when analyzing Zhuang brocade patterns because it helps researchers understand how different patterns can convey specific meanings as signs. For example, geometric patterns (such as checkered patterns and diamond patterns) can be used as image symbols to directly simulate the shape of objects; while mythological and animal patterns (such as dragon patterns and phoenix patterns) are more symbolic symbols that represent specific cultural meanings through conventional rules.

Geertz believes that culture is a system composed of symbols, which communicate, continue and develop people's knowledge and attitudes towards life through the concept system inherited from history. When analyzing Zhuang brocade, Geertz's theory helps researchers understand that brocade patterns are not only decorative, but also carry profound cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. By analyzing the symbols of natural elements, fertility worship and totem worship in brocade patterns, researchers can reveal the worldview, values and aesthetic orientation of the Zhuang people. (Geertz, 1973)

The selection of Pierce's semiotic theory and Clifford Geertz's cultural symbol theory to analyze Zhuang brocade is mainly based on the following reasons:

Pierce's semiotic theory provides a clear classification framework for analyzing Zhuang brocade patterns, including image symbols, indicative symbols and symbolic symbols. This classification method enables researchers to systematically identify and analyze various pattern types in brocade and understand their role as symbols in conveying meaning. At the same time, Pierce emphasized the endless nature of symbolic activities and believed that the objects represented by symbols can be interpreted again after being interpreted, which helps to reveal the deep cultural meaning behind the Zhuang brocade patterns and understand the continuous enrichment and reconstruction of these meanings in the long river of history. In addition, Pierce's symbolic triad (symbol representative, object, and interpretation item) has a more universal analytical significance than Saussure's symbolic dichotomy (signifier and signified), allowing researchers to more comprehensively examine the multiple dimensions of Zhuang brocade patterns as symbols. Clifford Geertz's cultural symbol theory emphasizes the importance of culture as a system composed of symbols. As an important carrier of Zhuang culture, the patterns and colors of Zhuang brocade itself are a symbol system. Through Geertz's theory, researchers can deeply understand the cultural meaning and symbolic value behind these symbols. In addition, Geertz focuses on the generation and reconstruction of symbols in the historical process, which helps researchers understand the changes and development of Zhuang brocade patterns in different historical periods, and how these changes reflect the evolution of Zhuang culture. At the same time, Geertz believes that symbols are an important means for people to communicate, preserve and develop life knowledge and attitudes. This view helps to reveal the role of Zhuang brocade patterns in communication and identity within the ethnic group.

2.5.2 Structural Functionalism

Functionalist theory in sociology focuses on how various social institutions and processes function to maintain the stability and continuity of society.

Emile Durkheim is considered one of the founders of functionalism. He viewed society as an organism in which different parts work together to maintain stability and social order. Durkheim introduced the concept of "social facts," external forces that influence individual behavior. He believed that these social facts, such as norms, values, and institutions, play a role in maintaining social cohesion and stability. For example, Durkheim's analysis of religion in his book *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* argued that religion helps to strengthen social solidarity and a sense of collectiveness. (Durkheim, 1912)

Talcott Parsons further developed functionalism by proposing a more systematic framework. He introduced the "AGIL" model, which outlined four functional requirements necessary for any social system to survive: adaptation, goal achievement, integration, and latency. Parsons emphasized the importance of value consensus, where shared values and norms help integrate individuals into the larger social

structure. His work emphasized the role of institutions such as family, education, and religion in maintaining social equilibrium. (Parsons. 1951)

Robert K. Merton expanded on the functionalist theory by addressing some of its limitations. He introduced the concepts of "manifest" and "latent functions," distinguishing between intended and unintended consequences of social activities. Merton also developed the concept of "dysfunction," recognizing that not all aspects of society contribute to social stability. Certain structures or actions can have a negative impact on social stability. His work provides a more nuanced understanding of how the various elements of society contribute to its functioning.(Merton,1968)

Malinowski believed that functionalism is a theoretical framework that originated in anthropology and sociology and aims to understand society by studying the functions and roles of various social institutions and cultural practices. The functionalist perspective emphasizes that each aspect of society plays a specific role that contributes to the overall stability and maintenance of the social system. It was very popular in the early 20th century and aimed to explain how society maintains balance and adapts to change. (Malinowski, 1922)

This research mainly uses Malinowski's functionalism to study the function of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade. The reasons can be summarized as follows:

Malinowski's functionalism emphasizes the functional role of cultural customs in society, that is, each cultural phenomenon has its actual needs and social functions. As an important part of Zhuang culture, Longzhou Zhuang Brocade has rich patterns, colors and patterns that not only have aesthetic value, but also play an important role in multiple aspects such as economy, society and culture. From the perspective of functionalism, we can have a deeper understanding of the multiple functions and actual contributions of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade in Zhuang society.

The research method of functionalism emphasizes field investigation and in-depth observation, which is highly consistent with the needs of studying Longzhou Zhuang Brocade. The production skills, inheritance methods, and cultural connotations of Zhuang Brocade need to be deeply understood through field visits, observation of the brocade production process, and interviews with brocade artists. This empirical research method helps to obtain first-hand information and provides a solid foundation for analyzing the functions of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade.

From the perspective of functionalism, the study of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade can be carried out from multiple angles. For example, from an economic perspective, we can explore the economic value and market potential of Zhuang brocade as a commodity; from a social perspective, we can analyze the role of Zhuang brocade in community cohesion, identity recognition, etc.; from a cultural perspective, we can deeply study the historical and cultural information and artistic aesthetic value carried

by Zhuang brocade. This multi-angle functional analysis helps to fully reveal the multiple attributes of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

Functionalism believes that society is a complex system in which various parts are interrelated and interact with each other to jointly maintain the stability and operation of society. As an integral part of Zhuang culture, the function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade is also influenced and restricted by the entire social system. By studying the functional changes of Longzhou Zhuang brocade in different historical periods and social backgrounds, we can deeply understand how Zhuang society maintains balance and adapts to changes, and the role played by Zhuang brocade in it.

In addition, functionalism, as an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, provides a broad perspective and diverse methods for the study of Longzhou Zhuang brocade. In the study, we can draw on the theories and methods of related disciplines such as semiotics and cultural geography to deeply explore the functions and significance of Longzhou Zhuang brocade from multiple perspectives. This interdisciplinary research method helps to more comprehensively reveal the diversity and complexity of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

In summary, the reason for using Malinowski's functionalism to study Longzhou Zhuang Brocade is that it emphasizes the functionality of cultural customs, focuses on field research and in-depth observation, supports multi-angle functional analysis, helps understand the stability and adaptability of social systems, and provides an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. These factors together make functionalism a powerful tool and method for studying Longzhou Zhuang Brocade.

2.5.3 Cultural identity

Cultural identity theory focuses on how individuals and groups define themselves based on their culture, including language, traditions, values, and symbols. Here are four influential scholars' theories of cultural identity:

Stuart Hall is one of the most influential figures in the field of cultural studies, especially in the study of cultural identity. Hall argues that cultural identity is not fixed, but rather "constructed" and "fluid", influenced by historical, social, and political contexts. He proposes that cultural identity is formed through an identification process, in which individuals align themselves with a particular cultural narrative or tradition. Hall emphasizes the role of power and discourse in this process and points out that cultural identity is constantly negotiated and contested in social structures. Cultural identity is a construction, and Hall believes that cultural identity is a product that is never completed, always in process, and formed in representation. (Hall, 1990)

Homi K. Bhabha introduced the concept of "hybridity" in cultural identity, referring to the process by which identity is formed through the interaction of

different cultures. Bhabha's work emphasizes that cultural identity is not pure or static, but is constantly reshaped through contact with other cultures. He argues that this hybridity allows for the creation of new cultural forms and identities that challenge the fixed boundaries of traditional cultural identities. Bhabha also discusses the concept of a "third space" where hybrid identities are formed, providing a place for resistance to dominant cultural narratives. Hybridity and the Third Space, Bhabha's theory argues that cultural identity is formed in the "in-between" space where different cultures meet and merge. (Bhabha, 1994)

Edward Said's theory of "Orientalism" is crucial to understanding cultural identity, especially in the context of East-West relations. Said argues that Western cultural identity is constructed in opposition to an imagined "East", which is portrayed as exotic, backward and fundamentally different. This binary opposition was used to justify colonialism and imperialism. Said's work highlights how cultural identity is shaped by power dynamics and representations of the "other". He challenges essentialist views of cultural identity and argues for a more nuanced understanding of the complexity and interrelationships between different cultures.

Orientalism and Cultural Identity, Said's theory explains how Western depictions of the East and the resulting power imbalances shape cultural identity. (Said, 1978)

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital" is at the core of his theory of cultural identity. Bourdieu believes that individuals gain cultural identity by accumulating cultural capital, which includes education, language, tastes and cultural knowledge. This cultural capital is then used to gain social status and power in society. Bourdieu also proposed the concept of "habitus", which refers to the deep-rooted habits, skills and characteristics that individuals acquire through their cultural environment. These habitus elements shape a person's cultural identity and influence their behavior and views in society. Cultural capital and habitus, Bourdieu's theory emphasizes the role of cultural capital in identity formation and the reproduction of social inequality. (Bourdieu, 1986)

Edgar said in "Key Concepts in Cultural Theory" that identity issues are crucial to cultural studies insofar as cultural studies examines the various contexts in which individuals and groups construct, resolve and defend their identities or self-understandings. This sentence explores the importance of identity issues in cultural studies in depth. Edgar's theory emphasizes the central position of identity issues in cultural studies. It points out that cultural studies focuses on how individuals and groups construct, maintain and defend their identities in different contexts. The dynamics and diversity of identity are crucial to understanding social and cultural phenomena, reflecting the depth and breadth of cultural studies. (Edgar, 2016)

This study uses Edgar's cultural identity theory to study Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

Deepen understanding of the formation and change of cultural identity: Edgar's cultural identity theory emphasizes how individuals and groups construct, maintain and defend their own identity in different contexts, which provides a comprehensive framework for studying Longzhou Zhuang brocade. By analyzing the inheritance, use and significance of brocade skills in society, we can deeply understand how the Zhuang people maintain and develop their cultural identity in historical changes.

Reveal the diversity and hybridity of cultural identity: Edgar's theory is consistent with Bhabha's concept of "hybridity", which can reveal the integration and innovation of Longzhou Zhuang brocade in the interaction of different cultures. Brocade patterns, colors and techniques may integrate multiple cultural elements. This diversity not only enriches the brocade itself, but also reflects the diversity and openness of Zhuang cultural identity.

Analyze the impact of power dynamics on cultural identity: Edgar's theory prompts researchers to pay attention to the role of external forces in shaping cultural identity, which echoes Said's "Orientalism" theory. By examining the impact of external factors such as mainstream culture and market economy on Zhuang brocade weaving skills and their identity, we can reveal how power dynamics affect cultural identity and how the Zhuang people seek self-definition and resistance in these external factors.

Emphasize the role of cultural capital in identity: Combined with Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital", Edgar's theory can help analyze the value of Longzhou Zhuang brocade as cultural capital in the Zhuang community. The inheritance and display of brocade skills is not only a manifestation of cultural identity, but also an important way for individuals to accumulate cultural capital and improve their social status. This analysis helps to understand the role of cultural capital in identity construction and social stratification.

Promote interdisciplinary communication and integration: Edgar's cultural identity theory provides an interdisciplinary perspective for the study of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, which helps to promote communication and integration among multiple disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies. This interdisciplinary cooperation can not only enrich research methods and theoretical frameworks, but also provide more comprehensive solutions for the inheritance and development of Zhuang culture.

Guiding cultural protection and inheritance strategies: Through Edgar's theoretical perspective, the study can reveal the challenges and opportunities faced by Longzhou Zhuang brocade in the current social context, and provide a theoretical basis for the formulation of scientific and reasonable cultural protection and inheritance strategies. For example, according to the dynamics and diversity of

cultural identity, inheritance and innovation paths that adapt to the trend of modernization and globalization can be designed.

In summary, using Edgar's cultural identity theory to study Longzhou Zhuang brocade can help to deeply understand the complexity and dynamics of cultural identity, reveal its formation and change process in historical changes, and its diversity and hybridity in the interaction of different cultures. At the same time, this kind of research can also provide theoretical support for the formulation of effective cultural protection and inheritance strategies.

2.6 Related Research

2.6.1 Literature Review on the History of Zhuang Brocade

According to In "A Study on the History and Modern Development of Guangxi Zhuang Brocade", Qin Zichen (2021) made a detailed periodization of the history of Zhuang brocade: Origin stage: During the Warring States Period, the ancestors of the Zhuang nationality began to use natural fibers such as hemp for simple weaving activities, which was the embryonic stage of Zhuang brocade. Initial development stage: During the Qin and Han Dynasties, with the spread of Central Plains culture and technical exchanges, the Zhuang nationality's weaving skills began to develop initially, but the brocade craftsmanship was still rough at this time. Mature stage: During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Zhuang nationality's weaving skills improved significantly, and the brocade patterns and colors became more diverse. Zhuang brocade began to be widely circulated among the people as a textile with local characteristics. Heyday stage: During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Zhuang brocade reached its heyday of development. It not only enjoyed a high reputation in the country, but also became a tribute to the court. Its exquisite skills and unique artistic style were widely recognized by the royal family and the people. Decline and revival stage: Since modern times, with the impact of industrialization and modernization, the traditional brocade skills of the Zhuang nationality have faced the dilemma of inheritance. However, in recent years, with the joint efforts of the government and all sectors of society, the Zhuang brocade skills have been effectively protected and revived.

As Fan Zhidao (2021) said, in "Zhuang Brocade Techniques and Inheritance", the historical evolution of Zhuang brocade techniques was divided into more detailed periods: Early germination: From ancient times to the Qin and Han dynasties, the ancestors of the Zhuang nationality used natural fibers for simple textile activities, and the brocade technique was still in its infancy. Technical accumulation: From the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties, the Zhuang nationality's textile techniques gradually accumulated, and brocade patterns and colors began to show a trend of diversification. Skill maturity: During the Tang and Song dynasties, the Zhuang brocade technique reached a high level, the loom structure

became more complex, the brocade patterns were exquisite, and the colors were rich. Heyday: During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Zhuang brocade was famous throughout the country as a local specialty textile, with exquisite craftsmanship and complex and varied patterns. It became a tribute to the court. Modern dilemma: Under the impact of modern industrialization, traditional brocade techniques are facing a crisis of inheritance, market demand has decreased, and the technique has gradually declined. Modern revival: Since the end of the 20th century, with the improvement of awareness of the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the Zhuang brocade technique has been revived, and the combination of modern technology and traditional techniques has injected new vitality into the future development of Zhuang brocade.

According to Lu Qiong (2017), the origin and development of Zhuang brocade: Zhuang brocade originated in the Warring States Period, when the ancestors of the Zhuang people had begun to use natural fibers such as hemp for textile activities. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, with the spread of Central Plains culture, the Zhuang textile skills were initially developed, but the brocade craftsmanship was still rough at that time. During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Zhuang brocade skills were significantly improved, and the brocade patterns and colors began to be rich and diverse. Zhuang brocade, as a local characteristic textile, was widely circulated among the people. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Zhuang brocade reached its peak. Its exquisite skills and unique artistic style not only won the praise of the people, but also became a tribute to the court. Skill evolution: Zhuang brocade skills have undergone an evolution from simple to complex, from rough to exquisite. Traditional weaving tools such as bamboo cage machines have played an important role in the development of brocade skills. With the passage of time, the Zhuang people have continuously innovated in brocade skills and formed a brocade culture with local characteristics. Cultural inheritance and change: As an important part of Zhuang culture, Zhuang brocade carries rich historical and cultural information. In different historical periods, the patterns and patterns of Zhuang brocade reflect the social and cultural environment and aesthetic concepts of the time. Since modern times, with the impact of industrialization and modernization, the traditional Zhuang brocade skills have faced the dilemma of inheritance, but with the joint efforts of the government and all sectors of society, the Zhuang brocade skills have been effectively protected and revived. Although the document does not directly explain the historical periodization, the historical context of Zhuang brocade from its origin, development, heyday to modern difficulties and modern revival can be vaguely seen from its research content.

Nong Wenjun (2018) did not directly divide the history of Zhuang brocade into a comprehensive period in "Research on Jingxi Zhuang Brocade Culture from the Perspective of Symbolic Anthropology", but indirectly revealed the context of its historical development by analyzing the symbolic expression and cultural connotation

of Jingxi Zhuang Brocade in different historical periods. Special emphasis is placed on the cultural inheritance and changes of Jingxi Zhuang Brocade in local society, especially the challenges and adaptations faced by Jingxi Zhuang Brocade in modern social changes.

In his book *Research on Traditional Textile Crafts and Culture of the Zhuang Nationality*, Xu Xin (2016) focused more on the overall development of Zhuang textile crafts, but when discussing specific contents such as textile materials and weaving techniques, he also outlined the technological progress and artistic style changes of Zhuang brocade in different historical periods. He mentioned that from primitive and simple textile tools to complex jacquard looms, the Zhuang textile craftsmanship has undergone a long period of development and evolution. As a representative of them, the historical periodization of Zhuang brocade is closely linked to the development stage of the entire Zhuang textile craftsmanship.

From the papers of the above five scholars, different scholars have conducted multi-angle and multi-level research on the history and modern development of Zhuang brocade. These studies not only reveal the historical evolution, cultural inheritance and changes of Zhuang brocade skills, but also pay attention to its protection and revival in modern society. All studies focus on Zhuang brocade and explore its history, skills, culture and social significance. Although the specific periodization methods and expressions are different, several scholars have divided the history of Zhuang brocade into periods, identifying different stages such as its origin, development, prosperity, decline and revival. All studies have emphasized the role of Zhuang brocade as a cultural carrier, believing that it carries rich historical and cultural information and reflects the social and cultural environment and aesthetic concepts of different historical periods.

2.6.2 literature review on the Zhuang brocade symbols and social functions

Su (2024) mainly discussed the inheritance and innovation of Zhuang brocade patterns in the article "A Review of Research on Zhuang Brocade Patterns from the Perspective of Inheritance and Innovation". Through the literature survey method, the author systematically sorted out the domestic research results on the three perspectives of Zhuang brocade foundation, arts and crafts, and design application. The study found that although Zhuang brocade has attracted much attention as an intangible cultural heritage, its academic research is still insufficient, especially in the integration of pattern innovation and modern design. This study is of great significance to understanding the inheritance and innovation path of Zhuang brocade culture, and provides theoretical support and practical guidance for further promoting the application of Zhuang brocade patterns in modern design.

Wang & Mo (2015) conducted an in-depth study on the cultural value and functional changes of Xincheng Zhuang brocade in "A Study on Guangxi Zhuang

Brocade and Its Cultural Value and Function Changes - Taking Xincheng Zhuang Brocade as an Example". Through field investigation and historical document analysis, the author revealed the economic, cultural and religious significance of Zhuang brocade in Zhuang society, as well as the gradual weakening of its traditional functions in the process of modernization. However, the significance of Zhuang brocade as a symbol of national culture is still significant. This study provides rich historical and empirical data for understanding the role and cultural value of Zhuang brocade in social change, and has important implications for protecting and inheriting Zhuang brocade culture.

Through the research of Yang & Li (2024), the cultural structure and function of Dong embroidery in Liping, Guizhou, the paper did not explicitly list the authors, but deeply analyzed the cultural structure and function of Dong embroidery in Liping, Guizhou. Using ethnographic and cultural anthropological research methods, the author analyzed the pattern design, color application and the cultural implications and social functions behind Dong embroidery. The study found that Dong embroidery is not only an exquisite decorative art, but also an important carrier of national identity, religious beliefs and social communication. This study is of great value in understanding the uniqueness and universality of ethnic minority embroidery culture, and also provides a methodological framework for studying other ethnic embroidery cultures.

As Fan and Wang (2011) said in "National Cultural Symbolization and the Construction of Cultural Ecological Space-Taking Zhuang Brocade as an Example", using semiotics and anthropology theory, the generation, dissemination and identification mechanism of Zhuang brocade as a national cultural symbol was analyzed. The author points out that Zhuang brocade is not only a representative of material culture, but also a symbol of national spirit and social identity. In the context of globalization, the symbolization process of Zhuang brocade has an important impact on the construction of cultural ecological space. This study provides a profound theoretical insight into the role of national cultural symbols in social and cultural space, and provides a useful exploration for the inheritance and innovation of Zhuang brocade culture.

Based on the research of Wang (2023), from the perspective of cultural anthropology, this paper deeply analyzes the humanistic connotation of Longzhou Zhuang brocade art in Guangxi. Through field surveys, oral history interviews and other methods, the author reveals the unique artistic style and profound cultural heritage of Longzhou Zhuang brocade. The study found that Longzhou Zhuang brocade not only reflects the aesthetic taste and religious beliefs of the Zhuang people, but also carries rich historical memories and national emotions. This study provides detailed information and in-depth analysis for a comprehensive understanding of the

humanistic value of Zhuang brocade art, which is of great significance to promoting the inheritance and development of Longzhou Zhuang brocade art.

In the article "Zhuang Brocade: The Social Life History Changes as a Gift", Liao (2023) mainly discussed the important role of Zhuang brocade in traditional society and its life history changes as a gift. Through historical document analysis and social and cultural perspectives, the author reveals the multiple meanings of Zhuang brocade in Zhuang society. Zhuang brocade is not only a daily necessity, but also a gift in important life ceremonies such as the full moon wine for newborns and weddings, carrying deep emotional and symbolic meanings. However, with the advancement of modernization, the traditional function of Zhuang brocade has gradually faded, and its life status as a gift has also faced challenges. This study is of great significance for understanding the changes of traditional handicrafts in modern society and provides a reference for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

Ning (2010) in the article "Zhuang Brocade: The Construction and Contemporary Representation of a Cultural Symbol", mainly discussed the construction process of Zhuang brocade as a cultural symbol and its contemporary representation. Through field investigation and document analysis, the author reveals how Zhuang brocade has transformed from a traditional handicraft to a symbol with broad cultural recognition. In the context of modernization and globalization, Zhuang brocade not only represents Zhuang culture, but also becomes an important symbol of local culture and national identity. This study is of great significance for understanding the generation and change mechanism of cultural symbols, as well as their functions and values in contemporary society.

Lu (2017) in "Study on Animal Patterns of Zhuang Brocade" mainly discussed the formation, evolution and cultural connotation of animal patterns of Zhuang Brocade. Through a detailed analysis of the animal patterns of Zhuang Brocade, the author revealed the cultural significance of totem worship, nature worship and fertility worship behind these patterns. Animal patterns are not only an expression of the aesthetics and emotions of the Zhuang people, but also an important part of their historical memory and national identity. This study provides strong support for understanding the cultural connotation and national characteristics of Zhuang Brocade art.

Cao & Shuai. (2017) in "Functional Characteristics and Cultural Connotation of Geometric Patterns of Zhuang Brocade" focused on the function and cultural connotation of geometric patterns of Zhuang Brocade. By analyzing the formal characteristics and cultural background of geometric patterns of Zhuang Brocade, the author revealed its versatility in decoration, symbolism and aesthetics. Geometric patterns not only enrich the artistic expression of Zhuang Brocade, but also carry the yearning and pursuit of the Zhuang people for a better life. This study provides a new

perspective for the artistic research and cultural inheritance of Zhuang Brocade patterns.

Through careful analysis and sorting of relevant literature, we can see that the current research on the symbols and social functions of Zhuang brocade has made significant progress. These studies not only reveal the profound cultural heritage of Zhuang brocade, but also explore its inheritance and development path in modern society.

In terms of research methods, existing studies mostly use methods such as literature survey, field survey, oral history interview, cultural anthropology and semiotics theory. These methods have performed well in revealing the symbolic meaning, cultural value and social function of Zhuang brocade, but they also have certain limitations, such as the singleness of research perspective and the limitations of sample selection. Therefore, future research still needs to be further innovated and improved in methods, such as interdisciplinary integrated research and wider regional coverage.

From the perspective of research content, the existing literature mainly focuses on the following aspects:

The cultural symbolic significance of Zhuang brocade. Su Beixin pointed out in "A Review of Zhuang Brocade Pattern Research from the Perspective of Inheritance and Innovation" that as an intangible cultural heritage, the inheritance and innovation of Zhuang brocade's patterns need urgent attention. Although there has been a certain accumulation of research, there are still obvious shortcomings in the integration of patterns and modern design.

In "National Cultural Symbolization and the Construction of Cultural Ecological Space - Taking Zhuang Brocade as an Example", Fan Xiujuan and Wang Jingjing used semiotics and anthropology theories to deeply analyze the generation, dissemination and identification mechanism of Zhuang brocade as a national cultural symbol, emphasizing its important role in the construction of cultural ecological space under the background of globalization.

The social function and historical changes of Zhuang brocade. Wang Yiping and Mo Wanyu in "Research on Guangxi Zhuang Brocade and Its Cultural Value and Function Changes - Taking Xincheng Zhuang Brocade as an Example" revealed the economic, cultural and religious significance of Zhuang brocade in Zhuang society through field investigation and historical document analysis, as well as the gradual weakening of its traditional functions in the process of modernization, but its significance as a symbol of national culture is still significant.

The article "The Humanistic Connotation of Guangxi Longzhou Zhuang Brocade Art from the Perspective of Cultural Anthropology" deeply analyzes the unique

artistic style and profound cultural heritage of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade through field surveys and oral history interviews, and emphasizes the rich historical memory and national emotions it carries.

The educational function and inheritance countermeasures of Zhuang brocade. The article "Thoughts on the educational function and inheritance countermeasures of Zhuang brocade from the perspective of educational anthropology" points out that integrating Zhuang brocade into the education system can effectively promote the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade culture through various channels such as school education and community inheritance, and provide new ideas for the educational inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

However, there are still some shortcomings in the current research. The research perspective is single. Existing studies mostly explore Zhuang brocade from a single perspective such as culture, art or social function, lacking an interdisciplinary comprehensive perspective. The sample selection is limited, and the geographical coverage of some studies is not wide enough, resulting in limited universality of the conclusions. Insufficient integration of modern design: Although existing studies have realized the integration of Zhuang brocade and modern design, the specific paths and methods still need to be further explored.

In summary, although the current research on the symbols and functions of Zhuang brocade has achieved remarkable results, there are still many issues that need to be explored in depth. Future research needs to continue to innovate and improve in methods and content.

2.6.3 Research on the crisis and countermeasures of Zhuang brocade

Previous studies on brocade weaving technique have accumulated rich results, which not only reveal the historical origin and cultural connotation of brocade weaving technique, but also explore its value in contemporary society in depth. For example, Lu Qiong's dissertation emphasizes the importance of Zhuang brocade weaving as a carrier of national culture by combing through the developmental flux of Zhuang brocade weaving culture, and points out the potential of transforming and applying traditional elements in modern design (Lu, 2019). Wang Mei's study explores the historical origin, artistic characteristics, inheritance status and development strategies of Zhuang brocade weaving technique in Longzhou, Guangxi. By analyzing the inheritance mode and the dilemmas faced by Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique, specific development paths such as combining modern science and technology, innovating the marketing mode, and strengthening the inheritor's responsibility for innovation are proposed, aiming to promote the sustainable development of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique (Wang, 2022). Fan Zhidao's study comprehensively examined the historical development, loom structure, weaving process, cultural and artistic characteristics, and the current

status of inheritance of Zhuang brocade weaving technique in Longzhou, Guangxi. Using a variety of research methods, combined with oral history interviews and field surveys, it systematically elaborates the uniqueness of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique, and proposes an innovative inheritance model of multi-party cooperation led by the government, organized by the association, and participated by the inheritors in response to the inheritance dilemma (Fan, 2019).

Regarding the role of vocational education in the inheritance of skills, last night's study by Qian Yihui and Huang pointed out that the cultivation of professionals in intangible cultural heritage requires the improvement of the education system, the reinforcement of governmental functions, and the promotion of vocationalization and multidisciplinary exchanges and collaboration (Qian & Huang, 2013). Gao Han et al. explored the problems faced by intergenerational inheritance of rural handicrafts, and took Tujia brocade weaving in western Hunan as an example, proposing vocational education countermeasures to promote the inheritance and development of rural handicrafts by establishing specialties, standardizing school curricula, carrying out school-based training, and building innovative platforms (Gao, Chen & Jiang, 2017). Taking Suzhou embroidery as an example, Ye Shengyan and Jia Limin analyzed the inheritance methods of traditional handicrafts and proposed innovative talent cultivation modes such as "order-type cultivation", "master studio system" and the intervention of modern education technology, aiming at enriching and expanding the cultivation of traditional handicrafts talent. The aim is to enrich and expand the path of traditional handicraft talents training (Ye & Jia, 2011). Sun Jiapeng et al. elaborated the necessity and logical starting point of diversified cultivation of traditional handicraft talents in vocational colleges and universities, constructed three cultivation modes: academic education, vocational training, and academic education + vocational training, and put forward promotion strategies such as strengthening the survey of student sources and establishing a modularized curriculum system (Sun, Shi & Wang, 2023).

Although many results have been achieved in brocade weaving technique, cultural inheritance and vocational education, there are still some gaps and deficiencies in the current research. Firstly, there are relatively few specialized studies on Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique, especially the lack of in-depth studies on the crisis of talent fault and the response strategy of vocational education. Secondly, the existing studies mostly focus on the descriptive analysis of the skills themselves or the inheritance mechanism, but less on the specific role and implementation path of vocational education in the inheritance of the skills. Finally, there is a lack of systematic and comprehensive research that closely combines the inheritance of brocade weaving technique with the innovation of vocational education.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

The following sections will elaborate on the core elements of the study, identify the main questions and objectives of the study, describe the timeline of the study, including the start and end dates of the study, as well as the key points in time, introduce the research methodology used, define the areas covered by the study, identify the criteria for the selection of the study population and the sample, as well as the specific sources and numbers of the sample. Describe the tools used in the study, which are essential for the collection and processing of data, describe in detail the process of data collection, ensure the reliability and validity of the data, describe how the data will be organized and analyzed in order to reveal the answers to the research questions.

3.1 Scope of Research

3.1.1 Research content

3.1.2 Research Period

3.1.3 Research methods

3.1.3.1 Literature analysis

3.1.3.2 Grounded theory

3.1.3.3 Field observation

3.1.3.4 In-depth interviews

3.1.3.5 Focus groups

3.1.3.6 Case studies

3.1.3.7 Narrative analysis

3.1.3.8 Visual analysis

3.1.4 Research area

3.1.5 Population and sample

3.2 Research Administration

3.2.1 Research tools

3.2.1.1 Interview tools

3.2.1.2 Observation tools

3.2.1.3 Interview guide

3.2.1.4 Focus-group guide

3.2.1.5 Group discussion guide

3.2.2 Data collecting

3.2.2.1 In-depth interviews with Zhuang brocade weavers

3.2.2.2 Participant observation in brocade weaving workshops

3.2.2.3 Photographic documentation

3.2.2.4 Archival research

3.2.2.5 Audio and video recordings

3.2.2.6 Sampling technique

3.2.2.7 Surveys

3.2.3 Organizing and analyzing data

3.2.3.1 Collating and organizing data

3.2.3.2 Data cleaning and pre-processing

3.2.3.3 Data analysis

3.2.3.4 Data integration

3.2.3.5 Data visualization

3.2.3.6 Interpretation and conclusions

3.2.3.7 Report writing

3.2.4 Presentation of research results

3.1 Scope of Research

3.1.1 Research content

3.1.1 To study the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

3.1.2 To study the symbols of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

3.1.3 To study the social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

3.1.4 To study the inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

3.1.2 Research Period

The research cycle of this paper is expected to start from July 2023 and last until July 2024, with a total research duration of about one year. In order to ensure the smooth progress of the research and the high-quality completion of the paper, the following detailed research schedule is formulated:

Table 1 Research schedule

No	Stage	Time Range	Main Work Contents
1	Preliminary Preparation	July 2023	Determine research topic and objectives, collect and read relevant literature, develop a detailed research plan and timeline
2	Fieldwork and Data Collection	August 2023 - October 2023	Conduct fieldwork in Guangxi Longzhou, deeply understand the craftsmanship, symbolic meanings, and social functions of Zhuang brocade, conduct interviews and surveys to collect first-hand data
3	Data Organization and Analysis	November 2023	Organize and categorize collected data, conduct in-depth analysis using qualitative and quantitative methods, identify the symbolic characteristics, functions, and inheritance methods of Zhuang brocade
4	Dissertation Writing (First Draft)	December 2023 - February 2024	Write a paper based on the data analysis results
5	Dissertation Revision and Improvement	March 2024 - May 2024	Continue to conduct field investigations in Longzhou area, conduct interviews, and verify the information collected in the early stage to ensure the logic, rigor and academic nature of the paper.
6	Dissertation Defense and Submission	June 2024 - July 2024	Complete the final draft of the paper, make final revisions according to the tutor's opinions, submit the final version of the paper, and prepare for the defense

Source: Luo Yingteng (2023)

This research timeline planning aims to ensure the orderly progress of research work and provide clear timelines and work objectives for the successful completion of the dissertation. Actual implementation may require appropriate adjustments based on the actual situation.

3.1.3 Research methods

This study is based on the use of qualitative research, which is a set of systematic methods used to explore and understand human behavior, experiences, attitudes, and social phenomena. These methods aim to gather rich, in-depth data through non-numerical sources such as interviews, observations, and texts in order to gain insight into the complexities and nuances of a given topic. In conducting my research on Zhuang Zhuang brocade, I will use the following methods to do so.

3.1.3.1 Literature analysis

analyze historical documents, literature and archival materials related to Zhuang brocade, such as ancient Zhuang brocade textiles, cultural texts or historical records. Study ancient Zhuang brocade artifacts and compare their designs and patterns with modern Zhuang brocade patterns to determine the changes and continuity of this art form over time.

3.1.3.2 Grounded theory

Use grounded theory methodology to develop a theoretical or conceptual framework based on data collected from Zhuang brocade weavers and participants. A theoretical model was developed to explain the factors that influence Zhuang brocade weavers to adopt modern weaving techniques.

3.1.3.3 Field observation

Direct observation of Zhuang brocade weaving workshops or traditional Zhuang brocade weaving activities to obtain first-hand information on Zhuang brocade weaving techniques and social dynamics. Observe a Zhuang brocade weaving class to understand the steps involved in the production of Zhuang brocade textiles and the interaction between the teacher and participants.

3.1.3.4 In-depth interviews

open-ended interviews with Zhuang brocade artisans, experts and community members to understand their experiences, views and practices related to Zhuang brocade. Interviews were conducted with government officials from cultural departments in Longzhou County, Guangxi, professors engaged in related cultural research, Zhuang brocade masters, neighboring aborigines, tourists, and local intellectuals to learn about their perceptions of the process of creating Zhuang brocade, their skills, and the culture of specific motifs in the design of Zhuang brocade.

3.1.3.5 Focus groups

Organize group discussions with Zhuang brocade practitioners or enthusiasts to explore common beliefs, values and perspectives related to the art of Zhuang brocade weaving and its conservation. For example, a focus group with Zhuang brocade

artisans could be hosted to discuss the challenges they face in maintaining the traditional Zhuang brocade art in a modern environment.

3.1.3.6 Case studies

Conduct in-depth surveys of specific Zhuang brocade producing communities or areas to study the social, cultural and economic factors that influence the production and preservation of Zhuang brocade. For example, a case study could be conducted on a remote village known for its unique Zhuang brocade weaving tradition to understand how the lifestyle and environment of the local community influences their Zhuang brocade weaving practices.

3.1.3.7 Narrative analysis

Analyze narratives and personal stories shared by Zhuang brocade weavers and community members to explore the cultural significance and meaning of Zhuang brocade in their lives. For example, oral histories of older Zhuang brocade weavers could be collected to reveal the role of Zhuang brocade in preserving cultural identity and passing on traditional knowledge to younger generations.

3.1.3.8 Visual analysis

Visual analysis is used to study the complex patterns, colors and symbolism in Zhuang brocade textiles to understand how these elements reflect cultural values and beliefs. For example, analyze the symbolism behind specific animal motifs in Zhuang brocade designs and explore their connection with local myths and legends.

Above all, after using a variety of qualitative research methods in an integrated manner, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of Zhuang brocade and its cultural significance can be achieved.

3.1.4 Research area

The location chosen for this study is Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which is not only one of the important birthplaces of Zhuang brocade in Guangxi, but also the location of the Zhuang brocade family workshop and the Li Suying brocade weaving workshop for poverty alleviation. As a representative of Guangxi's intangible cultural heritage, Longzhou Zhuang brocade enjoys a high reputation for its weaving level in Guangxi and even in the whole country. The Longzhou Zhuang brocade workshop was also recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council in June 2018 as one of the first "Intangible Heritage + Poverty Alleviation" employment workshops in China, which further highlights its outstanding achievements in the protection of traditional crafts and poverty alleviation work.

The primary reason for choosing Longzhou County as the study site is its profound cultural heritage of Zhuang brocade. As a treasure of traditional craftsmanship of the Zhuang people, Zhuang brocade has a long history and a broad mass base in Longzhou County. The Zhuang brocade here has exquisite craftsmanship, rich and varied patterns, bright and vivid colors, fully demonstrating the wisdom and creativity of the Zhuang people. The existence of Zhuang brocade family workshop and Li Suying brocade weaving workshop for poverty alleviation has injected new vitality into the inheritance and development of local Zhuang brocade culture.

On the other hand, Longzhou has a Zhuang brocade inheritor, Li Suying, whose personal charisma and influence as the inheritor of the Zhuang brocade weaving technique of the autonomous region-level intangible cultural heritage is also one of the important reasons for choosing Longzhou County. she can weave the Zhuang brocade at the age of 12, and she is the fifth-generation inheritor of the Golden Dragon Zhuang brocade in Longzhou. The Zhuang brocade she weaves has a delicate and unique conception, rigorous and exquisite weaving skills, and brilliant and generous colors. From 2012 to 2020, the Zhuang brocade woven by Li Suying has won awards for nine consecutive years in Guangxi or national handicraft exhibition competitions. For example, in August 2012, her "Golden Dragon Brocade" won the Bronze Prize in the First Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and in October 2013, her "Golden Dragon Colorful Brocade" won the Bronze Prize in the Second Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition. In October 2013, its Zhuang brocade "Golden Dragon Colorful Zhuang" won the bronze prize in the second Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and in September 2015, its Zhuang brocade "Ruyi Fields" won the excellence prize in the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and in November 2018, its Zhuang brocade "Liu Di Hua Hua" won the bronze prize in the first Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition. In November 2018, its Zhuang brocade "Dark Flowers" won the Encouragement Prize of Guangxi Arts and Crafts "Bagui Tiangong Award". In December 2017, Li Suying was named master of arts and crafts of Chongzuo City. 2018, Li Suying twice with the Chongzuo City delegation, went to Beijing to participate in the CCTV "Charming China City" competition, in the competition performance of weaving Zhuang brocade, by the attention of the national audience for Chongzuo City to win the national competition championship. Contributed a part of strength.

Over the years, Li Suying has been invited many times to participate in various ethnic and folk cultural exhibitions and performances organized by Longzhou County, Chongzuo City and the Autonomous Region, to show the Zhuang brocade woven by herself to all walks of life. Li Suying also went to Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi Arts Institute, Guangxi Nationalities Teachers College, Guangxi Museum of Nationalities, Chongzuo Zhuang Museum, etc. to teach brocade weaving skills to students and brocade enthusiasts. Li Suying also went to Nanning and Hangzhou twice to participate in the training class for Chinese intangible cultural

heritage inheritors organized by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, and was one of the four invited intangible heritage inheritors in China. In August, Li Suying was invited to Thailand to participate in the cultural activities of "Sino-Thai Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection and Inheritance Works Exchange Exhibition". In Thailand, Li Suying's four works of Zhuang brocade "Green Zhuangxiang" and "Traditional Charm" were collected by Maha Sarakham University of Thailand.

In addition, the Longzhou County government and related organizations have also facilitated the research by attaching importance to and supporting the Zhuang brocade culture. They have done a lot of work in terms of policy support, financial investment, publicity and promotion, creating a good external environment for the inheritance and development of Zhuangjin culture. At the same time, the love and participation of local people in Zhuangjin culture also provide rich materials and cases for the study.

To summarize, Longzhou County of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region was chosen as the location for the study of Zhuang brocade based on its deep cultural heritage, outstanding inheritors, and extensive support from the government and society. It is not only rich in Zhuang brocade resources and active cultural ecology of Zhuang brocade, but also successful practice and innovative exploration of combining traditional crafts with modern life. Through in-depth study of the development of Zhuang brocade culture and industry in Longzhou County, we can provide useful reference and inspiration for the protection and inheritance of traditional crafts.

3.1.5 Population and sample

In the fieldwork, the study population was categorized into three groups for practical purposes: key informants, practice informants, and general informants.

Key informants: 6 in total, namely, 2 relevant heads of the local government's cultural department, 1 relevant head of the tourism department, and 3 professors and doctoral supervisors who study Zhuang culture as well as culture-related issues.

Casual Informants: about 12 person. The person in charge of the Zhuang brocade production workshop, the chief technician of the Zhuang brocade technique, the brocade weaver of the Zhuang brocade production workshop, the apprentice who is learning the Zhuang brocade technique, and the individual who is weaving his/her own brocade at home are all vital members in the chain of the Zhuang brocade industry.

General informants: about 20 person. Local villagers and tourists, students from local schools, consumers who come here to spend money, fans of the Zhuang brocade culture, teachers and students from nearby universities, etc.

3.2 Research Administration

3.2.1 Research tools

This study is dedicated to conducting a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of this topic. To ensure the breadth and depth of the research, we will meticulously plan and implement various data collection strategies and methods. In addition to conventional questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, observation methods, focus groups, group discussions, and archival research, we aim to obtain richer and more diverse perspectives. Through these comprehensive data collection tools and methods, we will explore the symbolic significance, social functions, and inheritance of Longzhou Zhuang brocade from all aspects and perspectives.

3.2.1.1 Interview tools

When exploring the topic of "Zhuang brocade in Longzhou: symbols, functions and inheritance", in-depth interviews, as a key method of qualitative research, will provide us with in-depth, detailed and insightful data. Through in-depth face-to-face or telephone interviews with Longzhou Zhuang brocade artisans, culture bearers, and scholars in the field, we expect to be able to directly touch the essence of the Zhuang brocade production process, to deeply understand its deeper meaning as a cultural symbol, to comprehensively explore its multiple functions in social life, and to deeply excavate the key problems and potential solutions in the process of its inheritance.

The implementation of the interviews will follow a well-designed outline to ensure that the content of the interviews is systematic and relevant. The outline will focus on the production process, symbols, social functions, and the current status and challenges of Zhuang brocade, and guide the interviewees to share their professional knowledge, unique insights and rich experiences. During the interviews, we will record the whole process to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information, as well as to facilitate the subsequent organization and analysis of the information.

Through in-depth analysis of the interview data, we expect to enrich and deepen our knowledge of the cultural connotation and social value of Zhuangjin. At the same time, these in-depth interview data will also complement and validate each other with the data obtained from other research methods (e.g., questionnaires, observation methods, etc.), and together they will build a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Longzhou Zhuangjin. Eventually, these research results will provide strong academic support and practical guidance for the protection, inheritance and innovative development of Zhuangjin.

3.2.1.2 Observation tools

In addition to questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the observation method will also be an important tool for obtaining direct and vivid information in this study.

By going into the actual scenes of Zhuang brocade workshops, museums, and bazaars in Longzhou area, we will experience and record various activities and phenomena related to Zhuang brocade in the dual roles of participants and observers.

In the Zhuang brocade workshop, we will witness the exquisite craftsmanship and unique charm of Zhuang brocade products. By observing the skill and craftsmanship of the artisans, we will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of the Zhuang brocade production process. At the same time, the interaction with the artisans will also provide us with more valuable information about the technique and inheritance of Zhuang brocade production.

In the museums and bazaars, we will have the opportunity to observe the enthusiasm and attitude of the people towards Zhuang brocade. By observing how people appreciate, buy and use Zhuang brocade products, we will be able to better understand the popularity and application scenarios of Zhuang brocade in contemporary society. These observations will provide important references for us to analyze the social function and cultural value of Zhuang brocade.

3.2.1.3 Interview guide

Interview scales provide a structured framework for conducting interviews. They consist of a set of predetermined questions or themes to ensure consistency across interviews and to facilitate the collection of data on specific aspects of the research subject.

3.2.1.4 Focus-group guide

A Focus-group discussion guide is an instructional document that provides detailed planning for focus group activities. The guide should clearly outline the discussion's purpose, which is to delve deeply into the significance of the Longzhou Zhuang Brocade as a cultural symbol, its functional role in social life, as well as its current state of inheritance and the challenges faced. The guide should also present a discussion outline, encompassing guiding questions, discussion flow, and time allocation, to ensure that the focus group can engage in thorough and effective exchanges around these core topics. Additionally, the guide should include requirements for participants' background information to facilitate the selection of representative discussion members.

3.2.1.5 Group discussion guide

A Group discussion guide serves as an operational manual to direct team or group members in conducting collective discussions on a specific theme. The group discussion guide should explicitly state the discussion's objective, which is to foster a shared understanding and deep contemplation among group members regarding the meaning, functional role, and inheritance issues of the brocade. The guide should

encompass discussion rules, such as active participation, respect for others' viewpoints, and avoidance of deviation from the topic, to ensure the orderly progression of the discussion. Simultaneously, the guide should encourage group members to share their research materials, viewpoints, and insights, leveraging collective wisdom to contribute to the study of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade. After the discussion, the guide should also instruct group members to summarize and reflect on the discussion outcomes, facilitating further refinement and elevation of research understanding.

3.2.2 Data collecting

3.2.2.1 In-depth interviews with Zhuang brocade weavers

The researcher will conduct face-to-face interviews with experienced Zhuang brocade weavers to learn about their brocade weaving knowledge, skills and experiences. The interviews will be semi-structured, allowing the brocade weavers to share their personal stories, the challenges they have faced, and the cultural importance of brocade weaving in their lives.

3.2.2.2 Participant observation in brocade weaving workshops

The researcher will go into the traditional Zhuang brocade weaving workshops to observe the process, the technique and the interaction between the weavers. The researchers will record in detail the brocade weaving steps, patterns, and cultural rituals or customs related to brocade weaving.

3.2.2.3 Photographic documentation

Photographs will be taken during the participant observation to visually capture the intricacies of the brocade patterns, the tools used, and the atmosphere of the brocade workshop. These photographs will supplement the written information and provide a visual record of the brocade weaving process.

Focus group discussions with the Zhuang community: Focus group discussions will be organized with members of the Zhuang community (including weavers, artisans and elders) to explore their views on brocade weaving and its cultural significance. The discussions will delve into the role of brocade in Zhuang festivals, ceremonies and traditional dress.

3.2.2.4 Archival research

The researcher will visit local museums, cultural institutions and archives to review historical documents, old brocade textiles and written records related to the history and evolution of Zhuang brocade. These materials will contribute to an in-depth understanding of the cultural heritage of brocade.

3.2.2.5 Audio and video recordings

Audio and video recordings will be made during the interviews and focus group discussions with the consent of the participants in order to accurately capture their reactions and expressions. These recordings will help in transcribing and analyzing the data.

3.2.2.6 Sampling technique

the researcher will use purposive sampling to select experienced and knowledgeable Zhuang brocade weavers as the primary informants for in-depth interviews. The researcher may also use a "snowball" sampling method to identify additional brocade weavers and experts in the field.

3.2.2.7 Surveys

researchers can distribute structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data on participants' demographic information, experience with brocade weaving, and perceptions of changes in brocade traditions.

By utilizing a combination of these data collection methods, the researcher will be able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Zhuang brocade culture, its historical context, the experiences of the weavers, and its cultural significance in the Zhuang community. The data collected from the fieldwork will serve as the basis for the study's analysis and interpretation.

3.2.3 Organizing and analyzing data

Organizing and analyzing the data obtained from the Zhuangjin fieldwork involves organizing the information collected, preparing it for analysis, and applying appropriate methods to derive meaningful insights. Below is a step-by-step guide on how to organize and analyze data:

3.2.3.1 Collating and organizing data

Collect all data gathered during the field survey, including Transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions. Field notes and observations from the tapestry workshop. Photographic documentation of the brocade weaving process and artifacts. Responses to surveys conducted. Archival research materials. Organize data into separate files or folders based on the source and type of data (interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, survey responses, etc.). Label each document with a unique identifier or code to maintain confidentiality and facilitate cross-referencing during analysis.

3.2.3.2 Data cleaning and pre-processing

Review and clean data to ensure accuracy and consistency. This may include correcting any transcription errors, removing extraneous information and standardizing response formats. Convert any qualitative data (interview transcripts, field notes) into text format and ensure that all data is machine-readable and compatible with the chosen analysis software.

3.2.3.3 Data analysis

Thematic analysis. read through the interview transcripts and field notes to identify common themes and patterns related to Zhuangjin. Use open coding to label data segments descriptively and then group similar codes into broader themes. **Analyze photographic data** to identify visual themes and patterns in the brocade weaving process and design. Use thematic analysis software (if available) to help manage and organize data. **Content analysis.** Data collected from archival research, historical documents, and other written sources were analyzed to identify key historical events, weaving techniques, and cultural practices related to Zhuang brocade. Relevant information is extracted and categorized for further analysis.

Quantitative Analysis. Use statistical software to analyze quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and means are calculated to summarize demographic information and survey responses. If applicable, perform inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests or t-tests, to explore relationships or differences between variables.

3.2.3.4 Data integration

Integrate qualitative and quantitative research findings for a comprehensive understanding of Zhuangjin culture. Use data triangulation to validate research findings by comparing results from different data sources.

3.2.3.5 Data visualization

Use charts, graphs and tables to present key findings for easy understanding and interpretation. Visual representations help to communicate complex information effectively.

3.2.3.6 Interpretation and conclusions

Interpret the collated and analyzed data to draw meaningful conclusions about the cultural significance of Zhuang brocade, the experiences of the weavers, and the challenges faced in preserving the traditional craft. Relate the conclusions to the research objectives and address any research questions posed at the beginning of the study.

3.2.3.7 Report writing

Write a comprehensive research paper that includes an introduction, methodology, data analysis, findings, discussion, and conclusions. Present the data compiled and analyzed in a clear, organized manner, referring to visual aids as necessary.

By following these steps, researchers can effectively organize and analyze the data obtained during the Zhuangjin fieldwork, providing valuable insights into the cultural heritage of this traditional craft.

3.2.4 Presentation of research results

This study is dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the cultural symbols, social functions and inheritance methods of Guangxi Longzhou Zhuang Brocade. Through field investigation, literature analysis and empirical research, it is expected to achieve the following important results:

Through careful observation and analysis of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade, the symbols are interpreted. The patterns in Zhuang Brocade are not only beautiful, but also carry profound cultural connotations. These symbols are often closely related to nature, religion, history and daily life, and each pattern represents a specific meaning or blessing. For example, certain specific animal and plant patterns symbolize auspiciousness, longevity and reproduction, while some abstract geometric figures may represent philosophical ideas such as heaven and earth, yin and yang. The interpretation of these symbols provides us with a new perspective to understand Zhuang culture.

In terms of function, Zhuang brocade is not only practical, but also plays an important role in social, etiquette, faith and other levels. In daily life, brocade is used as decoration, clothing and necessities in various ceremonies, reflecting its multiple functions in Zhuang society. In addition, brocade is an important symbol of the ability of Zhuang women to get married, showing their unique status in social structure and gender roles. Through the exploration of these functions, we can have a deeper understanding of the core position of Zhuang brocade in national culture.

Regarding the inheritance of Zhuang brocade, the traditional mother-daughter and master-apprentice inheritance is still the main inheritance mode, but with the advancement of modernization, this traditional mode is being impacted. This study will study these crises and propose corresponding countermeasures in order to contribute to the inheritance and development of this intangible cultural heritage.

The research results of this study will be reflected in the form of a paper.

CHAPTER IV

Research Results

This chapter analyses the four research objectives of this study, which revolve around four core sections. In the first section, the origins of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, its historical evolution and its developmental trajectory are traced through exhaustive literature collection and collation. In the second section, focusing on the symbols and meanings of Longzhou Zhuang brocade decoration. In the third section, the social functions of Longzhou Zhuang brocade are investigated, while the fourth section focuses on the current inheritance crisis and countermeasures of Longzhou Zhuang brocade. This corresponds to the four research objectives of this study:

- 1.To study the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
- 2.To study the symbols and social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.
- 3.To study the inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade.

In this chapter, the historical origin of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, the cultural connotation of the symbols of ornamentation, the social function, and the current inheritance crisis and coping strategies will be discussed in depth. Through detailed historical phasing, the researcher will trace the origin and development trajectory of Zhuang brocade and reveal its cultural changes in different historical periods. At the same time, the researcher will analyse the symbolic significance of Zhuang brocade patterns and colours by applying the theory of semiotics, and explore its unique value in the Zhuang culture. In addition, this chapter will focus on the multiple social functions of Zhuang brocade in education, identity and life rituals, revealing its important position in the Zhuang society. In the face of the inheritance crisis, the researcher will propose diversified countermeasures, such as vocational college education and modern apprenticeship system, with a view to promoting the sustainable development of Zhuang brocade, promoting Zhuang culture and passing on intangible cultural heritage.

4.1 History of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

- 4.1.1 Origin and legends of Zhuang brocade
- 4.1.2 Before 202 BC
- 4.1.3 From 202 BC to 220 AD
- 4.1.4 From 220 AD to 1368 AD
- 4.1.5 From 1368 to 1912

4.1.6 From 1912 to 1949

4.1.7 From 1949 to the present

4.2 Symbols and social function of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

4.2.1 Symbols of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

4.2.1.1 Categories of decorative motifs and their cultural significance

4.2.1.1.1 Geometric pattern symbols

4.2.1.1.1.1 Checkered pattern

4.2.1.1.1.2 Rhombus pattern

4.2.1.1.1.3 Circular pattern

4.2.1.1.1.4 Cloud and thunder pattern

4.2.1.1.2 Plant pattern symbols

4.2.1.1.2.1 Octagonal pattern

4.2.1.1.2.2 Chrysanthemum pattern

4.2.1.1.2.3 Peony pattern

4.2.1.1.2.4 Bamboo pattern

4.2.1.1.2.5 Gourd pattern

4.2.1.1.3 Mythological and animal pattern symbols

4.2.1.1.3.1 Loong Pattern

4.2.1.1.3.2 Phoenix pattern

4.2.1.1.3.3 Bird pattern

4.2.1.1.3.4 Tiger pattern

4.2.1.1.3.5 Crab pattern

4.2.1.1.3.6 Butterfly pattern

4.2.1.1.4 Chinese character pattern symbols

4.2.1.2 Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns: an interpretation of Zhuang culture under Geertz's theory of cultural symbols

4.2.1.2.1 Nature worship

4.2.1.2.2 Reproductive worship

4.2.1.2.3 Totem worship

4.2.1.3 Longzhou Zhuang brocade colours: the emotion and semantics of symbols

4.2.1.3.1 Colour sources and matching characteristics

4.2.1.3.2 Emotion and semantics of symbols

4.2.2 Social Functions of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

4.2.2.1 Educational functions

4.2.2.1 .1 Education for skills transmission

4.2.2.1 .2 Education in life and values

4.2.2.2 Cultural identity and reinforcement functions

4.2.2.3 The function of gifts in the liturgy of life

4.2.2.3.1 Zhuang brocade swaddling clothes in the birth ceremony

4.2.2.3.2 Zhuang brocade straps in the child's full moon ceremony

4.2.2.3.3 Zhuang brocade costumes and quilt covers in wedding ceremony

4.2.2.3.4 Zhuang brocade in funeral ceremony

4.3 Inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

4.3.1 Places and spaces for the inheritance of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

4.3.2 Inheritors of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

4.3.3 Inheritance crisis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

4.3.3.1 Low number of weavers

4.3.3.2 Fewer and older weavers mastering key skills

4.3.3.3 Low social recognition of weavers

4.3.4 Causes of the inheritance crisis

4.3.4.1 Reasons for the low number of weavers

4.3.4.2 Reasons for the scarcity and age of weavers mastering key techniques

4.3.4.3 Reasons for low social recognition of weavers

4.3.5 Inheritance strategy

4.3.5.1 Establish majors related to Zhuang brocade weaving techniques in vocational colleges and diversify enrolment

4.3.5.2 Implement the modern apprenticeship system and skills re-education

4.3.5.3 Parallel education, publicity and economic incentives

4.1 History of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

The objective of this section is mainly to study the history and development of Zhuang brocade, mainly adopting a qualitative research method, using research tools mainly including observation scales and interview outlines, and the data were acquired through the review of relevant literature, on-site observation, field visits, and on-site interviews, etc. After processing the data, we started from the origins of the Zhuang brocade and the legend, and gradually unravelled the mystery of its historical development. The six historical stages before 202 B.C., 202 B.C. to 220 A.D., 220 A.D. to 1368 A.D., 1368 A.D. to 1912 A.D., 1912 A.D. to 1949 A.D. and 1949 A.D. to the present are examined in turn, witnessing how the Zhuang brocade of Longzhou has continued to evolve under the baptism of the ages and has been passed down and innovated, ultimately becoming a bright pearl in the treasury of Chinese culture.

4.1.1 Origin and legends of Zhuang brocade

Throughout history, the inheritance and development of each culture are infused with distinctive narratives and memories. As a treasure among Chinese traditional handicrafts, this particular brocade is notable for its long history and rich cultural significance. According to "Ling Wai Dai Da" (written during the Song Dynasty), the Jiangxi Cave near Yongzhou produced brocade, but it was reserved for the local barbarian chiefs and leaders (Zhou, 1178, p. 123). Yongzhou refers to present-day Nanning, Guangxi, and Jiangxi Cave refers to the river valley plain of the left and right river basins in Guangxi, which was the settlement area of the Zhuang ancestors. This is the earliest recorded mention of this craft, indicating its high value during the Song Dynasty, particularly as a symbol of nobility and leadership. This account not only highlights its social importance at that time but also encourages further exploration of its origins and evolution in subsequent periods.

Regarding the earliest records of Guangxi brocade, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local Chronicles Compilation Committee (1992) asserts that this textile, also known as local brocade, was widespread in Zhuang-inhabited regions such as Xincheng, Yishan, Huanjiang, Jingxi, Longzhou, Binyang, Hengxian, and Yongning. The production of this fabric began in the Song Dynasty and spans over 900 years. At that time, the "Tan cloth" produced in the "two river prefectures and caves" was a precursor to this intricate weaving. This cloth, characterized by its white checkered patterns, wide width, and coarse lines, resembled the linear gauze of the Central Plains region. Although its color was monotone, it was already quite "thick

and heavy." The emergence of this art form in the Song Dynasty reflects the growth of the Zhuang handmade textile industry. This passage offers a detailed account of the development of Guangxi's textile industry from ancient times to the present, serving as a vital reference for the study of Guangxi's textile history.

Lu Qiong (2019) argues that the earliest reference to this brocade should be attributed to "Ling Wai Dai Da," written by Zhou Qufei in 1178 during the Song Dynasty. This significant historical and geographical work from the Southern Song Dynasty meticulously documents the author's observations in the Lingnan region, covering various aspects such as local socio-economic conditions, ethnic customs, natural resources, and Sino-foreign communications. It is an essential resource for studying the social, historical, and geographical aspects of the Lingnan region during the Song Dynasty. The Lingnan region mentioned in the book encompasses much of today's Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, naturally including Longzhou.

The Song Dynasty in 1178 is one of the dynasties in China's five-thousand-year history. Then, what about the time before the Song Dynasty, or even further back? Where should we trace the origin of Zhuang brocade? Based on such documentary clues, researchers decided to embark on a field exploration journey to Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, a place that is said to still retain traditional brocade weaving skills. The aim is to capture some vivid information about the origin of Zhuang brocade from oral histories through deep communication with local residents, which may fill the gaps in documentary records or add new dimensions to existing historical narratives. As anthropologist Clifford Geertz said, "Culture is a pattern of meaning transmitted through symbols in history" (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Researchers hope that through this fieldwork, they can capture those cultural symbols embedded in daily life, especially the stories and memories about Zhuang brocade, which may tell this long history in another way.

To understand the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, researchers conducted fieldwork in Jinlong Town, Longzhou County. Led by field collaborators, they went to the "Beauty Village" in Jinlong Town. Beauty Village, located 4 kilometers east of Banchi Village, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Chongzuo City, Guangxi, is a minority village. The villagers benefit from high-quality mountain springs, so they have beautiful appearances and long lifespans; octogenarians are ubiquitous. Therefore, it is also known as the "Beauty Village" and the "Longevity Village." The ancestors of this village migrated from Dai ethnic settlements. After thousands of years of interaction with local Zhuang people through marriage and other exchanges, it has both ethnic characteristics and is also known as "Little Xishuangbanna." The village is surrounded by flat and open land, with orderly villages, high-quality and abundant agricultural products, and a good life for villagers. Its folk customs and language have Zhuang and Dai characteristics, and they are skilled in weaving, embroidery, and antiphonal singing. Beauty Village still maintains its own ethnic

characteristics in clothing, customs, and folklore. The attire is mostly the Zhuang "long shirt," and there is also the "short shirt" that exposes the navel. The girls in this village are ingenious and skilled at weaving and tailoring their own ethnic clothing. The Zhuang brocade they weave is particularly popular and has now become a tourist souvenir in the village.



Figure 2 Villagers in beauty village weaving Zhuang brocade

Source: Longzhou county broadcasting and television (2021)

This fieldwork is not only an exploration of tangible cultural heritage but also a tribute to intangible cultural heritage, especially oral traditions and skill inheritance. Researchers hope to correlate what they have seen and heard during this investigation with documentary records, providing richer and more three-dimensional materials for the study of Zhuang brocade and allowing more people to understand and cherish this wisdom and creativity from the ancient Zhuang people.

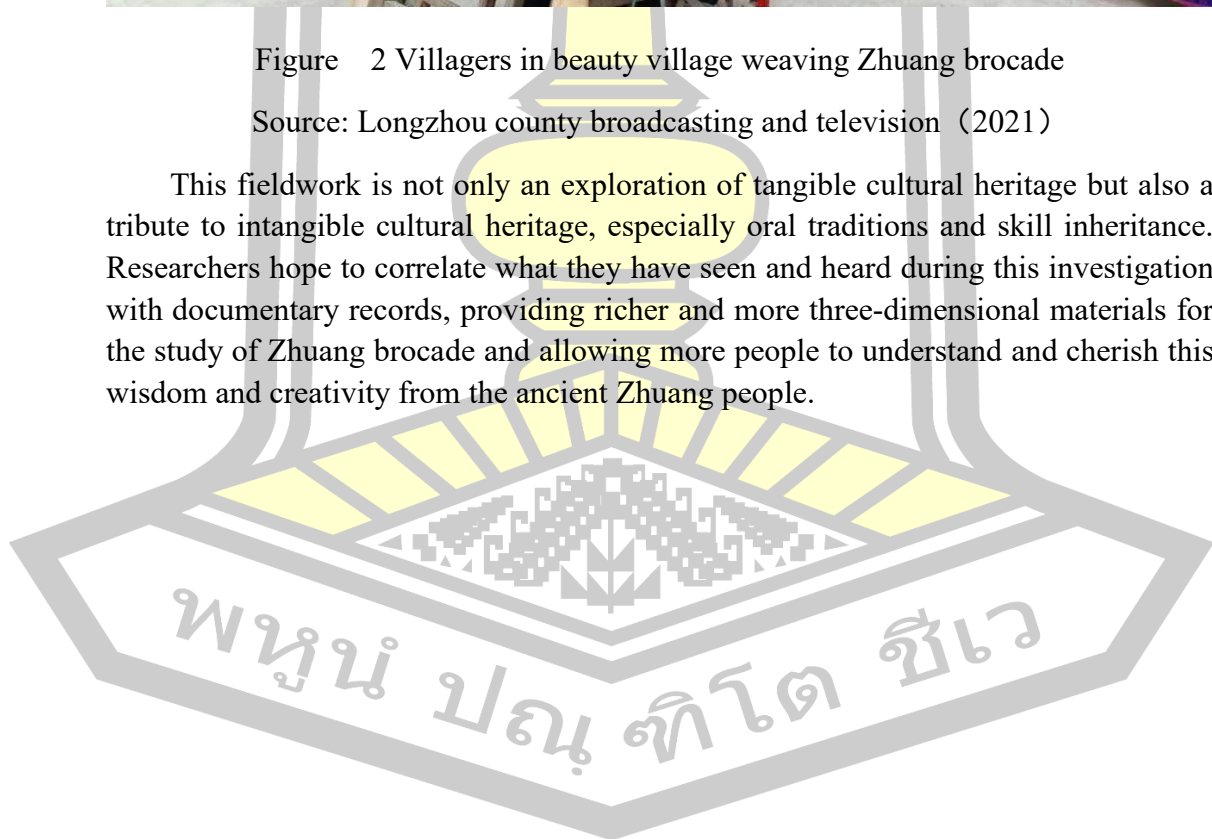




Figure 3 Researchers listening to an elder tell the story of Zhuang brocade

Source: Luo Yonteng (2023)

Zhao Shiyu (2003) suggests that scientific empirical historical research often dichotomizes legends and history, while the challenges of postmodern historiography question this, as they attempt to deconstruct the objectivity of historical writing. In fact, both oral legends and historical documents are different expressions of historical memory. Through this common characteristic, we can connect the two to deepen and enrich historical research.

Long ago, there was a girl named Dani Mei, who was ingenious and full of curiosity and love for all things in nature. One day, while walking in the mountains, she stumbled upon a spider's web, with dewdrops sparkling like dazzling gems under the sunshine. This marvelous sight deeply touched her heart, inspiring her to create an unprecedented fabric using multicolored silk threads as the weft and natural fine yarn as the warp. After countless attempts and efforts, Dani Mei finally wove a magnificent piece, marking the birth of a unique weaving art. The brocade she produced at that time was woven with silk, hemp, and silk cotton, characterized by a tough texture and bright colors, which quickly became beloved by the people.

There is also a touching story about the beauty of this traditional brocade. Legend has it that long ago, an elderly woman lived with her three sons at the foot of a mountain. She was a skilled weaver who had poured her heart and soul into creating a masterpiece. This intricate fabric was embroidered with houses, gardens, fields, orchards, vegetable gardens, fish ponds, as well as chickens, ducks, cows, and

sheep—all vividly portrayed, resembling a miniaturized world. However, one night, a sudden gust of wind carried the precious brocade eastward to the horizon, where a group of fairies, captivated by its beauty, took it as a model.

The elderly woman was heartbroken. She sent her two elder sons to search for the lost fabric, but they both feared the hardships of the journey and chose instead to enjoy themselves in the city. Her heart filled with disappointment and sorrow, the elderly woman believed her work was lost forever. Just then, her third son stood up. Determined to recover his mother's creation, he set out on the journey, no matter how difficult and perilous it might be.

With the help of a large stone horse, the third son crossed volcanoes and seas. After enduring countless hardships, he finally found the group of fairies. He saw the red-clad fairy holding the brocade pattern and weaving, so he seized the opportunity to reclaim his family's treasure. Riding the large stone horse, he returned to his mother with the beloved fabric.

Upon returning home, the third son unfolded the exquisite fabric under the sunshine. Gradually, the brocade expanded, transforming into a beautiful homeland. Houses, gardens, fields, orchards, vegetable gardens, and fish ponds all appeared one by one, resembling a real world. The third son and the elderly woman were stunned; they never expected this creation to possess such magical power.

What the third son didn't realize was that the fairy, who truly cherished the elderly woman's handiwork, had secretly embroidered her own image onto it. When the third son returned with the brocade, he also brought back the beautiful fairy. He married her, and they lived a happy life together, weaving and working side by side, passing down the beauty of this traditional craft.

After more than a thousand years of development, Guangxi's ethnic brocade art, epitomized by this weaving tradition, has become an important part of China's folk art heritage. In the long-term labor practice of the people of all ethnic groups in Guangxi, this art form has produced rich and splendid patterns. These designs strongly reflect their love and respect for life, nature, and cultural heritage, permeate the optimistic spirit of their culture, embody people's good aspirations, and express sincere emotions. The brocade is not just a fabric but also a cultural legacy and symbol, carrying the wisdom and emotions of the people, passed down from generation to generation, never fading away.

4.1.2 Before 202 BC

According to Wu Weifeng's research on the technology and history of this traditional weaving art, it is essential to start with the earliest use of hemp branches and leaves, which form the foundation of this ancient craft. Historical records and archaeological data confirm that Guangxi has been a significant hemp production area

since ancient times. The region, home to the Zhuang people, is abundant in fine-fibered hemp and food resources. Both wild and cultivated hemp have been present, indicating that the use of hemp in this culture has a long history (Wu, 2014, p. 39).

Research by Lu Qiong (2019) shows that brocade weaving is a complex and time-consuming skill that gradually evolved from simpler textile techniques. Based on this, it can be inferred that the Zhuang community initially mastered basic weaving methods for daily clothing, which eventually led to the creation of the more intricate craft known as Longzhou brocade. The germination, formation, and development of this brocade tradition confirm this inference.

From the research of the two scholars, it can be seen that the climate in Guangxi is suitable for the growth of hemp crops such as *Cannabis sativa*, *Boehmeria nivea*, and *Pueraria lobata*, which are important textile materials. Fibers from these hemp crops, such as *Pueraria lobata* vine and *Boehmeria nivea* in China, can be further processed into textile fibers. Through splitting, combing, spinning into yarn, twisting into ropes, and weaving into clothing, these fibers provided early technological accumulation for the development of Guangxi Zhuang brocade .



Figure 4 *Boehmeria nivea*

Source: Plants of the world online: <https://powo.science.kew.org> (2024)

Tracing the history of Longzhou Zhuang brocade further back, it can be traced to the development history of hemp crops in Guangxi. Research by Xu Xin and Li Fuqiang (2015) indicates that the earliest physical evidence of hemp textiles in Guangxi was found in the No. 17 Warring States tomb at Andengyang, Matou Township, Wuming County, Guangxi, and it is believed that hemp had already

become one of the main clothing materials for the local people in Guangxi at that time. According to research by Huang Yunzhong and Ye Nongxin (1988), the Andengyang tomb group dates back to the Warring States period. Therefore, combining the research of these scholars, the earliest cultivation of hemp crops and the earliest physical evidence of hemp textiles in Guangxi, based on archaeological excavations of ancient tombs, should have emerged during the Warring States period in China, which existed approximately from 476 BCE to 221 BCE. This period is also known as the Warring States era or simply the Warring States, a period in Chinese history.

From this, we can understand that the earliest hemp textiles discovered in Guangxi archaeological excavations appeared around 476 BCE, about 2,500 years ago. Zhuang brocade is a complex textile craft that has developed from simpler textile techniques.

Approximately 2,200 years ago, from 204 BCE to 111 BCE, there were already ceramic spinning wheels used for textiles in Guangxi. Research by Xiong Zhaoming and Li Shijia (2022) shows that ceramic spinning wheels were found in Warring States tombs excavated at Yinshanling in Pingle, Guangxi. Among them, tombs labeled M49 and M118 yielded Type I spinning wheels and ceramic vessels. Therefore, Xiong Zhaoming and Li Shijia believe that the time of the ancient tombs where the ceramic spinning wheels were unearthed should be during the period of the Nanyue Kingdom in Guangxi. The Nanyue Kingdom existed approximately from 204 BCE to 111 BCE.



Figure 5 Ceramic spinning wheel

Source: Sohu website: https://www.sohu.com/a/407539177_120381639 (2023)



Figure 6 Ceramic spinning wheel unearthed from tomb No. 1 at Luobowan, Guigang city, Guangxi in 1976

Source: Sogou baike: <https://baike.sogou.com/v75720387.htm> (2023)

The discovery of the ceramic spinning wheel indicates that the textile craft in Guangxi had emerged at least 2,200 years ago. The ceramic spinning wheel was a tool used by ancient people for spinning thread, made of gray or red pottery. Its shape is somewhat like a round cake or a raised circle with a hole in the middle, where a wooden or bone handle can be inserted for spinning thread. The use of pottery as a burial object also suggests significant development in Guangxi's textile handicraft industry over two thousand years ago.

4.1.3 From 202 BC to 220 AD

The Han Dynasty (February 28, 202 BCE – November 25, 220 CE), also known as Tianhan, emerged after the Qin Dynasty and holds a representative and pivotal position in Chinese history. During the Han Dynasty, the art of Zhuang brocade in Guangxi experienced initial development.

Near Luobowan, Guigang City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Tomb No. 1 at Luobowan, located about 5 kilometers away from the urban area of Guigang, was discovered in 1976. According to the excavation report written by Jiang Tingyu, Qiu Zhonglun, Liang Zhaochi, and Liang Jinge (1978), the burial objects of the tomb owner included silk, linen, brocade, etc. These textiles were all decayed, with only fragments remaining. Inside the seventh sacrificial coffin, there were numerous fragments of orange-red brocade with a black background, displaying vivid colors.

Accompanying the unearthed artifacts was a burial inventory list, written on wooden tablets titled "Cong Qi Zhi," which recorded the burial objects of the tomb

owner. According to Wang Guiyuan's (2011) research paper, the list documented information about textiles, including fifty robes in two chests, all with silk edging; two small suits in one chest, also with silk edging; ten hats, one gold hairpin, in one chest with silk edging; two Bi Jian (a type of garment), in one chest with silk edging; sixty-three pieces of silk, each three zhang long, with three pieces of clothing in one chest; seventeen rolls of cloth in one chest with silk edging; one set of armor and one helmet, both with silk edging. The tomb contained a considerable amount of embroidered textiles, including bolts of silk and cloth, as well as clothes made from silk and cloth, and sacks for storing other items. Upon excavation, individual fragments were found, including linen and silk textiles.

When exploring the historical origins of Guangxi's traditional brocade, the importance of the Han Dynasty cannot be overlooked. This period can be regarded as the germination stage of what would later become known as Zhuang brocade. According to detailed records in Volume 28 of "Han Shu," traveling south from Xuwen in Hepu and entering the sea would lead to a large state spanning thousands of li in all directions (Ban, 2012). This description not only reveals the extensive knowledge and exploration of the southern seas during the Han Dynasty but also highlights the significance of the Guangxi region to the empire, providing a historical backdrop and cultural foundation for the emergence of this intricate craft.

The vivid depiction of the local residents' customs in the book further underscores the Han Dynasty's role in the formation of this textile art: the residents wore garments resembling a single quilt, with a hole in the center for the head. Men engaged in farming, planting rice, and storing hemp, while women reared silkworms and wove cloth (Ban, 2012). These details not only showcase the unique clothing culture of ancient southern ethnic groups but also reflect their self-sufficient agrarian lifestyle, emphasizing their proficiency in textile techniques. The ancestors of the Zhuang people had already demonstrated advanced skills in weaving during this period, laying a solid foundation for the subsequent development of brocade weaving in the region.

The term "Ping Yue" is explained in the "Suo Yin" section of "Shi Ji Zhao Shi Jia" as referring to the current Zhuya and Dan'er regions, where people were called Ou, also known as Ou Yue (Si, 2015). This explanation reveals the historical presence of the Zhuang ancestors, the Ou people, and proves their early mastery of textile techniques. This discovery is significant for understanding the origins of this brocade tradition, indicating that during the Han Dynasty, the ancestors of the Zhuang people had already possessed advanced weaving skills, providing the technical foundation for what would become Zhuang brocade.

"Nan Man Zhuan" in Volume 86 of "Hou Han Shu" further supplements information about the ancestors of the Zhuang people, who lived in regions such as Yelang and Ailao, wove cloth from tree bark, dyed it with grass seeds, and favored

wearing colorful garments with tail-shaped cuts (Fan, 2010). The "colorful garments" mentioned here can be seen as the early form of this brocade tradition, showcasing the creativity and aesthetic pursuits of the Zhuang ancestors in textile arts and offering important clues for studying the origin and development of the brocade. This description enriches our understanding of ancient clothing culture in the region and reveals that brocade weaving had already begun to take shape during the Han Dynasty.

Archaeological discoveries also provide strong evidence supporting this perspective. In the 1970s and 1980s, several Han tombs were discovered in Luobowan, Guangxi, and several orange-red brocade fragments with a looping pattern were excavated from the seventh sacrificial pit (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum, 1988). These finds not only prove that the ancestors of the Zhuang people during the Han Dynasty had already mastered the art of weaving monochromatic and patterned brocade but also provide valuable physical evidence for studying the origins, techniques, and social significance of this textile tradition. Through the analysis of these artifacts, we gain further confidence in the pivotal role of the Han Dynasty in the development of what would later be known as Zhuang brocade.

In summary, the Han Dynasty played a crucial role in the formation of Guangxi's brocade tradition, marking the initial stage of what would eventually become a significant cultural heritage. During this period, the Zhuang ancestors had already mastered sophisticated textile techniques, and the early forms of this brocade had emerged. Historical records and archaeological artifacts collectively paint a vivid picture of the origins and evolution of this intricate craft, highlighting the significant influence of the Han Dynasty in the development of what is now recognized as Zhuang brocade.

4.1.4 From 220 AD to 1368 AD

During the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties, spanning from 220 AD to 1368 AD, the brocade tradition of the Zhuang people underwent significant development and evolution. According to historical records, it was during the Song Dynasty that this intricate textile was formally documented under the name "Zhuang Brocade," marking the initial establishment of its cultural identity. The cloth described in Song Dynasty literature as "white with checkered patterns, elegant and thick" serves as a representative example of early brocade from this period.

Zhou Qufei also provided detailed descriptions of a unique textile known as "Tan" in his work *Ling Wai Dai Da*. He wrote: "In the regions of Liuzhou's left and right Jiangdong, the indigenous residents possess a special craft. They can weave a textile called white Tan. This white Tan has a base color as pure as snow, with clear checkered patterns woven into it. The fabric is broad in width, and the lines are thick, resembling the fine linear silk from the Central Plains in some ways. However, it is

even more beautiful and thicker, giving a particularly elegant appearance when worn. Therefore, this white Tan is recognized as the top-grade attire in the southern regions and is deeply loved by the people."

According to research by Lu Qiong (2019), the "white with checkered patterns" mentioned by Zhou Qufei likely refers to the brocade produced in Zhuang regions at that time. This textile features a white base with neatly woven checkered patterns. Despite its single color, it appears fresh and elegant. Early examples of this fabric are noted for two prominent characteristics: one is its thick texture, which makes it warm and comfortable to wear, and the other is its distinctive checkered pattern, which sets it apart from other textiles of the time. These attributes not only reflect the ingenuity and diligence of the Zhuang people but also highlight their unique aesthetic sensibilities and cultural traditions.

Notably, during the Yuanfeng period of the Northern Song Dynasty, the establishment of the Shujin Yard included Guangxi brocade (identified as Zhuang brocade) among the silk fabrics selected for tribute. This recognition not only underscored the prestige of this brocade but also highlighted the excellence of its weaving techniques. As the Song Dynasty imperial court established the Shujin Yard in Sichuan to produce brocade exclusively for the royal family and nobility, the brocade from Guangxi, as one of these select textiles, gradually evolved into what we recognize today as Zhuang brocade. This development laid a solid foundation for the future evolution of this cultural art form.

At the same time, the emergence of patterned cloth added a new chapter to the history of textiles. The Nan Yue Zhi mentions that Guizhou produced ancient Zhongteng vines, which bore fruit resembling goose feathers, with seeds like pearls. After removing the seeds, the fibers could be spun into silk-cotton and dyed into patterned cloth. This indicates that people at the time had begun using this special cotton from the Zhongteng vine for textile production, showcasing the diverse development of textile technology. During the Tang Dynasty, the popularity of cotton textiles such as "Gui Cloth" further promoted advancements in textile technology. According to the Tai Ping Guang Ji, Gui pipe cloth was favored by court officials for its thick and warm properties, even leading to a fashion trend. This, in turn, facilitated the exchange and enhancement of weaving techniques (Li et al., 2020).

Entering the Song dynasty, the textile technology among the Zhuang people had reached a considerably high level, with various distinctive fabrics emerging endlessly, such as "white Yi," "Lianzi," and "flower Lian." The emergence of these fabrics not only enriched the types of Zhuang brocade but also reflected the Zhuang people's innovation and pursuit in textile arts. However, with the rise of the cotton textile industry and changes in social demand, the hemp textile industry gradually declined, but its status as summer cloth or noble craftwork remained significant.

During the Southern Song Dynasty, Fan Chengda's *Gui Hai Yu Heng Zhi* (1986) and Zhou Qufei's *Ling Wai Dai Da* provided more detailed descriptions of the region's brocade tradition. Records of fabrics like "Tan" and "flower Lian" revealed that the distinctive characteristics of this textile art were becoming increasingly defined, especially with the description of "white with checkered patterns," indicating that early brocades were primarily monochromatic with thick, checkered designs. By the Yuan Dynasty, Fei Zhu's *Shu Jin Pu* meticulously documented the patterns produced at the Chengdu Shujin Yard during the Song era, highlighting various colors like true red and cyan green, along with complex and diverse designs such as large lion and horse-and-ball patterns. This indicates that the weaving techniques of Guangxi's brocade had reached a high level of sophistication, with the richness of colors and patterns suggesting a move towards greater refinement and artistic expression.

During this period, brocade weaving in this region transcended its practical origins, gradually becoming an important cultural symbol and carrier of Zhuang heritage. Its unique techniques, intricate designs, and deep cultural significance ensured that these textiles maintained their charm and vitality throughout the Song and Yuan dynasties and into later periods.

Since the Song Dynasty, this brocade has been widely acclaimed for its unique weaving methods and exquisite patterns. The advanced craftsmanship allowed the brocades to achieve a high artistic standard in terms of texture, design, and color. The diverse patterns, including checkered motifs, lions, and horse-and-ball designs, not only reflect the aesthetic preferences of the Zhuang people but also carry profound cultural and symbolic meanings.

By the Yuan Dynasty, the development of this brocade tradition had reached new heights. With the further enhancement of weaving techniques and continuous innovation in design, these textiles gradually became high-grade fabrics, deeply appreciated by nobles and scholars alike. At the same time, this brocade began to spread and be used in broader regions, becoming a key representative and disseminator of Zhuang culture. Apart from its practical value and cultural significance, the development of Zhuang brocade during the Song and Yuan dynasties was also closely related to the socioeconomic background of that time. With the development of agriculture and handicrafts, the textile industry gradually became an important part of the socioeconomic structure. As a leader in the textile industry, Zhuang brocade not only brought economic benefits to the Zhuang people but also made positive contributions to the socioeconomic development of that time.

In summary, the Song and Yuan dynasties were crucial stages in the development of Zhuang brocade. During this period, Zhuang brocade not only achieved a leap from its initial stage to maturity but also gradually became an important carrier and symbol of Zhuang culture. Its unique weaving technique, rich pattern design, and profound cultural connotations all ensured that Zhuang brocade

occupied an important position in society at that time and left a precious cultural heritage for later generations. Through an in-depth study of the development process of Zhuang brocade during this period, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the unique charm and value of Zhuang culture.

4.1.5 From 1368 to 1912

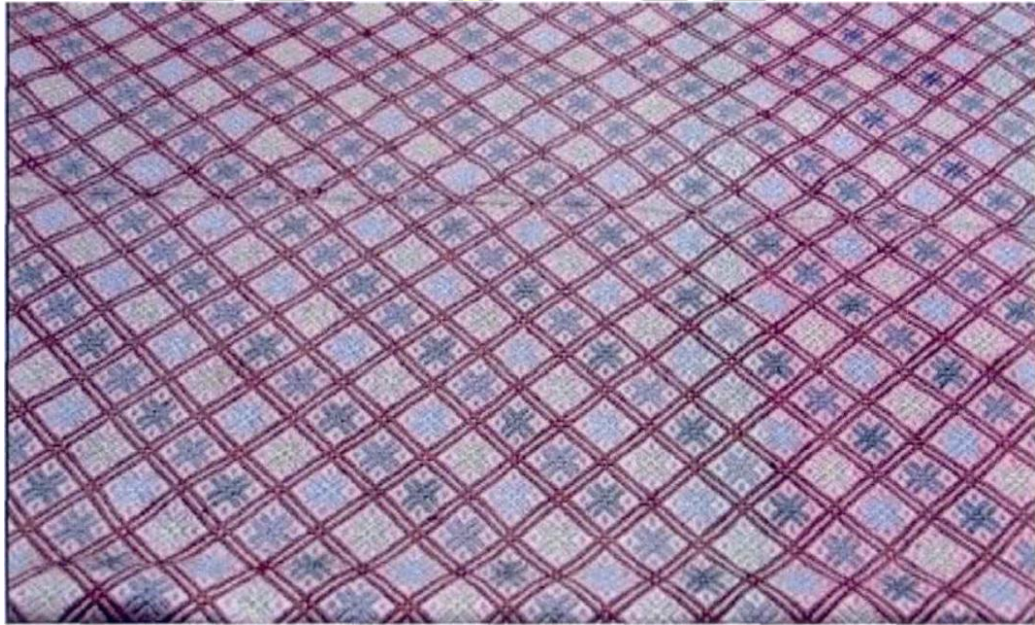


Figure 7 checkered well pattern of Zhuang brocade tribute in the Qing dynasty

Source: Lu Qiong(2019)

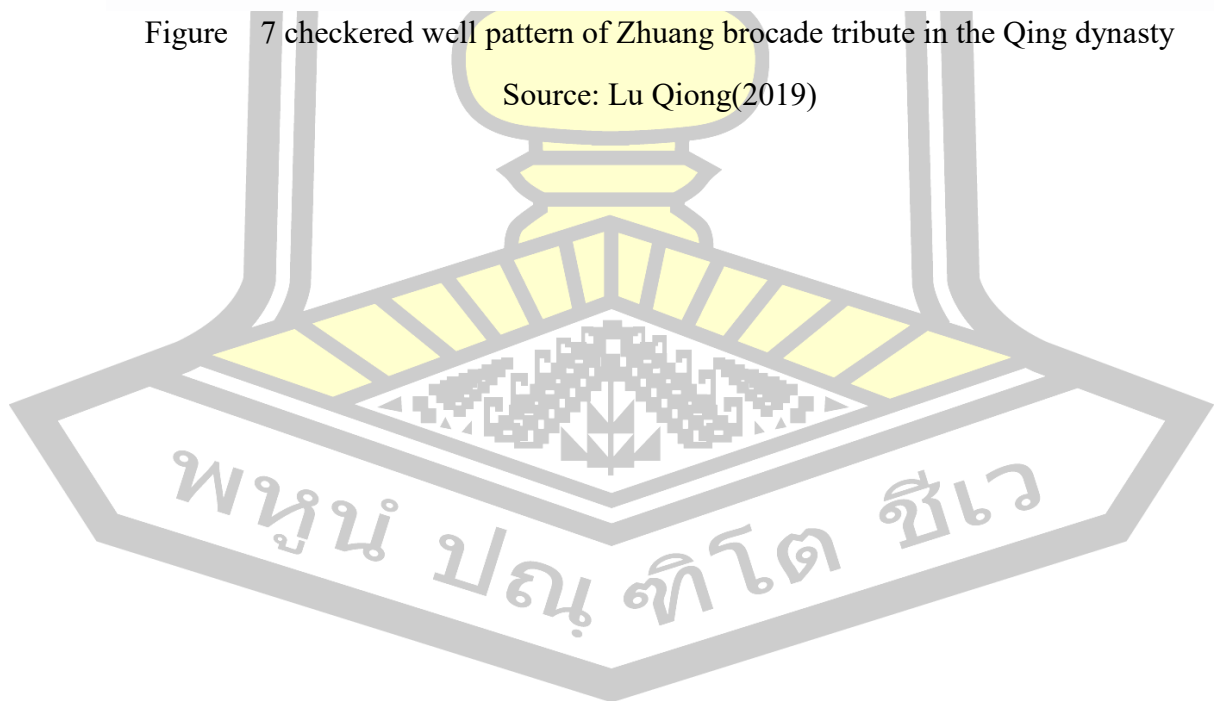




Figure 8 Chrysanthemum pattern of Zhuang brocade in the Ming and Qing dynasties

Source: Lu Qiong(2019)

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the brocade tradition of the Zhuang people matured and flourished, emerging as a prominent symbol of their culture. According to Wei Rong's *Xi Shi Qi*, during the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, patterns such as the "Wanzi Chrysanthemum," "Wanzi Diamond," and designs featuring dragons and phoenixes were not only highly favored as tribute items by the royal family but were also sold far inland, earning the region's brocades a place among China's "Four Famous Brocades."

Ming Dynasty scholar Wei Jun (2016), in his work *Xi Shi Rui*, noted that although the Yue region was not mentioned in *Yu Gong*, its history of producing shell-patterned fabrics for tribute is well-established, highlighting the early significance of these textiles.

By the Wanli period (1572–1620), the craft had reached new heights. "Wan-character Chrysanthemum Brocade," "Wan-character Diamond Pattern Brocade," and other designs featuring dragons and phoenixes became prized tribute items for the royal court, standing out among numerous offerings. This recognition demonstrated that the region's brocades had ascended to the ranks of China's most famous during the Ming Dynasty, earning high praise and considerable importance.

Ming Dynasty author Zhang Xianghe, in his *Occasional Notes of Western Guangdong*, described the Zhuang people's love for vibrant colors: "Whether it's clothing, towels, or blankets, they all like to use five-colored yarn to weave patterns

of flowers and birds. These textiles appear exquisite and colorful from a distance." This vivid portrayal showcases the passion for color and pattern, as well as the widespread application and unique charm of these brocades in daily life during the Ming era.

In the Qing Dynasty, the production and use of brocades among various ethnic groups in Guangxi expanded, with techniques reaching their peak. Modern research has uncovered a range of exquisite artifacts from the Qianlong period, including a yellow-ground floral blanket, a green and pink hui-patterned checkered blanket, a dark brown-ground geometric floral textile, and a beige-ground multicolored oblique Wan-character piece, as well as a well-patterned quilt cover collected in the Chengde Mountain Resort. These items not only testify to the superb skills and distinctive style of this craft during the Qing Dynasty but also affirm its high status and widespread influence at the time.

The Qing Dynasty marked the most prosperous period for this brocade tradition. Literature from this era not only increased in quantity but also provided more detailed records, solidifying the brocades as a prominent ethnic symbol. The Illustrated Tribute of the Qing Dynasty describes the attire of Zhuang people in He County: "Both men and women wrap their heads with floral towels, wear silver rings around their necks, and dress in blue clothes embroidered with green patterns. Women wear looped hairstyles adorned with silver accessories. The edges of their clothes are decorated with brocade, their short blouses are made of pure cotton, and their skirts are particularly magnificent. They are proud of their ability to weave these textiles, and when men go out, they always carry something woven by their families." This shows that brocade occupied an important place in Zhuang clothing, adding to its splendor. Additionally, weaving became a beloved activity, with nearly every Zhuang Women were expected to master the skill, reflecting the widespread use and cultural significance of these textiles among the Zhuang people. The 12th volume of the Liuzhou Prefecture Records from the Qianlong period also notes: "Brocade is produced in various counties and prefectures. The local people love vibrant colors, and whether it's clothing, towels, or blankets, they prefer to use five-colored yarn to weave patterns of flowers and birds. From a distance, these items appear exquisite and dazzling, but upon closer inspection, they may seem slightly rough. Despite this, the brocade remains highly cherished and is considered a treasure" (Wang, 1764).

This account indicates that during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, the locally woven brocade was already widely used in various aspects of daily life, becoming an indispensable necessity. Its characteristic of appearing dazzling from a distance but somewhat rough up close did not diminish the local people's affection for it; on the contrary, it was even more cherished.

Qing Dynasty author Shen Yuerin recorded in the "Zhuang Brocade" entry of his "Trivial Notes of Western Guangdong": "Although the women of the Zhuang ethnic

group may appear ghostly in appearance, their craftsmanship is exquisite. They dye silk and weave their traditional fabric, which is colorful and comparable to carved silk craftsmanship. This textile can be used as an initial mattress, so noble officials and wealthy merchants all compete to purchase it." This not only provides basic information about the brocade but also highlights its appeal to high-ranking officials and wealthy merchants due to its unique artistic and craft qualities.

During the Qing and Republican periods, this traditional weaving became a crucial component of a woman's dowry. According to the third volume of the Guangxu Guishun Direct-Controlled Prefecture Records from the Qianlong period, "When marrying off a daughter, a quilt cover made of local fabric is a mandatory part of the dowry, as everyone in this region can weave it. The fabric, woven from willow floss and available in five colors, is thick, durable, and valued at five liang. Unmarried women are required to learn this skill" (Office of the Local Chronicles Compilation Committee of Jingxi City, 2022). This demonstrates that during the Qianlong period, the people of Guishun Direct-Controlled Prefecture were adept at weaving this traditional textile, and a quilt cover made from it was a significant element of a woman's dowry. The fabric's characteristics—being woven with five-colored willow floss, its thickness and durability—made it relatively expensive, with five liang potentially equating to a year's wage for an employed worker.

Similarly, the Jingxi County Annals from the Republican period notes that betrothal gifts traditionally included money, livestock, and various other items, while the dowry from the female family comprised quilt covers, blankets, curtains, shoes, socks, and other household items made from this traditional fabric (Jingxi County Annals Compilation Committee, 2000). These records underscore that this textile reached its peak of prosperity during the Qing Dynasty, highlighting its importance and prevalence in daily life and cultural practices.

However, in modern times, with the rise of machine mass production, the rate of clothing production increased significantly, costs decreased, and styles continually innovated. This posed a considerable threat to the traditional weaving industry, leading to a gradual decline. Despite this, the textile remains a vital part of cultural heritage. Despite the impact of modern machine production, traditional brocade did not completely disappear and still holds a significant place in the lives of the Zhuang community. During the Qing Dynasty, the weaving techniques of this textile were further refined and developed, showcasing a greater variety of colors, patterns, and intricate designs. The craft itself represents a form of cultural inheritance, with each procedure and motif reflecting the wisdom and emotions of its creators.

In the late Qing period, although the brocade industry faced some challenges, the local population's appreciation for their woven textiles remained strong. They continued to use traditional handmade methods, viewing this practice as a continuation of their cultural heritage and a source of ethnic pride. This textile is not

merely a material product but a cultural symbol, carrying the history, traditions, and aesthetic values of the Zhuang people.

During the Republican era, despite significant societal changes, the woven fabric remained an essential part of the dowry for local women. Its significance went beyond practical use, representing adherence to and transmission of traditional values. A quilt cover or blanket made from this fabric was not only a daily necessity but also a testament to cultural continuity.

However, as modernization accelerated, this traditional craft faced unprecedented challenges. Machine-produced textiles quickly dominated the market with their lower prices and diverse styles, making handmade versions seem relatively expensive and inefficient. This shift affected production and sales, leading many artisans to abandon the craft and putting the weaving techniques at risk of being lost.

Despite these challenges, the community has not given up on preserving and promoting their traditional textiles. Recognizing its importance as more than just a handicraft, they have actively worked to enhance its visibility, train new artisans, and develop contemporary products related to this heritage, aiming to revitalize and sustain it in the modern world.

In summary, this textile experienced a journey from maturity to prosperity during the Ming and Qing dynasties, evolving into a key symbol of local culture. Although facing challenges from modern production methods, efforts to maintain and develop this tradition continue, reflecting its role not only as a craft but also as a symbol of cultural identity and pride.

4.1.6 From 1912 to 1949

During the period of the Republic of China, Zhuang brocade, as a unique traditional weaving technique, experienced significant development and changes.

Tracing back to 1912, statistics from the "DeLong" firm in Xiang, Xincheng County showed that its annual sales of traditional woven fabric reached over a hundred pieces. This figure not only reflected the prosperity of the market for this textile at that time but also indicated the great potential for development in the weaving industry.

In the 1930s, the industry for this traditional textile further developed. In 1935, Liang Shuying, an outstanding representative from Binyang County, traveled to Xincheng County to learn from local masters (Wu, 2014). This action demonstrated the active transmission of weaving skills and suggested that the technique was about to undergo new changes and developments. According to records from the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local Chronicles Compilation Committee (1992), from April 1 to 7, 1937, at the initial National Handicraft Exhibition held in Wuzhou, Guangxi, the "Loong and Phoenix Quilt Cover" woven by the mother of Zhou Changxing from Xincheng Chengxiang Street won the first prize. This honor

highlighted the exquisite craftsmanship and unique charm of the fabric and increased its popularity and recognition nationwide. Subsequently, the "Loong and Phoenix Quilt Cover" was exhibited in Nanjing, Shanghai, and other locations, attracting American merchants to compete for purchases, which further promoted international dissemination and exchange.

At that time, the weaving industry in Xincheng County Chengxiang Street had reached a considerable scale. Over 400 households were located in Chengxiang Street, with more than 200 engaged in the weaving business. Each household owned at least one or two weaving machines, and some even had three or four. With an estimated 400 machines in the town alone, excluding rural areas, this data fully demonstrated the prosperity of the industry and the popularity of weaving techniques among the local people.

In the 1940s, the inheritance and innovation of weaving techniques were further promoted. After returning from Xincheng, Binyang weaver Liang Shuying, while preserving traditional methods, innovated by incorporating local characteristics, resulting in a unique regional style of fabric and teaching this technique to local women. This led to a thriving weaving industry in Binzhou Town, with nearly every household owning a weaving machine, surpassing Xincheng in scale and output during the same period. This transformation not only spurred rapid development but also invigorated the tradition with new vitality (Fan, 2019).

Meanwhile, as a major production area in the Zuojiang and Youjiang river basins, Jingxi also showed vigorous development in its traditional textile industry. The fabric from Jingxi was widely distributed across towns and villages, with particularly prevalent production in Xinjing Town, Jiuzhou, Ande, and other townships. The growth of this weaving tradition in the region enriched its regional characteristics and laid a solid foundation for subsequent cooperation and development in the industry.

In summary, the period of the Republic of China was significant for the development of this traditional weaving craft. During this time, the fabric gained higher popularity and recognition nationwide and achieved remarkable progress in skill inheritance, innovation, and market promotion. These achievements laid a solid foundation for future development and made positive contributions to the preservation and advancement of traditional Chinese culture.

4.1.7 From 1949 to the present



Figure 9 "Beautiful Zhuang Brocade" - a masterpiece of Longzhou Zhuang brocade in 2021, presented to the party

Source: China daily online(2021)



Figure 10 Image of modern Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Source: Luo Yingteng, photographed at Li Suying Zhuang brocade studio in Longzhou, Guangxi(2023)

After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Communist Party of China and the government attached great importance to the development of ethnic minority industries, especially the weaving of Zhuang brocade. With the

support of financial, human, material, and technological resources, the Zhuang brocade industry embarked on a path of collectivization.

According to the "Guangxi General Annals: Textile Industry Annals" compiled by the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, in the early 1950s, the shift from individual to collective production marked a significant transformation in the weaving industry. This change, initiated through cooperative methods, moved the production of traditional brocade from a spontaneous and individual approach to a more organized, collective model. Starting in 1954, areas with concentrated brocade production, such as Jingxi, Xincheng, and Binyang, saw the establishment of cooperative groups under the guidance of the Autonomous Region Handicraft Industry Bureau and local government bodies. These groups organized folk artists for collective production. By 1956, based on these initial cooperatives, specialized factories like the Binyang Ethnic Brocade Factory and the Jingxi Brocade Factory were established, focusing on production and technical training. Additionally, the "Yufu" cooperative, comprising over 30 individuals, was set up in Laibin and later merged with other cooperatives to form the Ethnic Brocade Factory in Xinbin Town (1992, P310).

This shift completely transformed the traditional family production model, laying a solid foundation for further development. The government actively promoted traditional textile culture, marking the beginning of a new era for the industry. At the founding ceremony of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the "Loong and Phoenix Tablecloth" and brocade flags became cultural symbols of the ethnic group.

In the late 1950s, craftsmen from the major brocade factories in Xincheng, Binyang, and Jingxi were selected to learn the weaving techniques of Shu brocade in Sichuan. They subsequently introduced the "row loom," which could produce large bed brocades and significantly increased work efficiency by 2-3 times compared to traditional looms. The new technology allowed for continuous small patterns and expanded cloth width by four times (Wu, 2014).

By the 1970s, the Party's ethnic policies continued to guide the development of weaving techniques and production scale. Several significant factories were established, and both the workforce and annual output value grew. The Jingxi Brocade Factory, Xincheng Brocade Factory, Binyang Second Light Industry Brocade Factory, and Binyang Ethnic Brocade Factory were developed in 1969, 1975, 1978, and 1981, respectively. By 1988, the industry employed 350 people with an annual output value of 751,000 yuan. This period saw a marked improvement in production scale and weaving skills, further solidifying the foundation for continued growth (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1992).

However, starting from the 1990s, the impact of modern manufacturing and shifting market demands led to a gradual decline in the production of this traditional textile. The clothing of the local population became more sinicized, and the lack of supportive policies for ethnic minorities further diminished market demand. As a result, many brocade factories faced significant challenges and even closure. The original production scale within the region dwindled, with some factories struggling to survive and weaving techniques in certain villages facing the risk of becoming obsolete. Since 1993, annual production has steadily decreased, with output values dropping from 703,000 yuan in 1992 to 303,000 yuan in 1994. By the early 21st century, the remaining factories in Xincheng, Binyang, and Jingxi could only barely sustain themselves, with the Xincheng factory eventually shutting down due to poor performance, presenting further challenges for the industry (Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Local Chronicles Compilation Committee, 1992).

Despite these difficulties, efforts to revitalize the traditional craft persisted. Starting in 2004, the Guangxi government and various sectors of society focused on the transmission and development of this cultural heritage. The establishment of the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Research Institute and the founding of Guangxi Jinzhuangjin Cultural Art Co., Ltd., alongside other protective measures, brought renewed vitality to the craft. In 2003, with support from the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Research Institute, the Ethnic Brocade Factory was established, utilizing electric looms (K84 silk looms) to produce the textile. In February 2004, Guangxi Jinzhuangjin Cultural Art Co., Ltd. was founded, significantly contributing to the protection and development of the craft, including the creation of the "Guangxi Traditional Craft Exhibition Hall" in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Museum (Fan, 2019).

Additionally, notable artisans such as Tan Xiangguang and Meng Rujun have received national and provincial honors for their contributions to the craft. Tan Xiangguang was recognized as a "Chinese Ingenious Woman" at the 1995 National Women's Scientific and Technological Achievements Exhibition and later honored as a "Chinese Folk Art Master" in 2005. Jingxi's weaving technique was included in the national intangible cultural heritage list in May 2006, and Tan Xiangguang was awarded the title of "Chinese Brocade Art Master" by the National Brocade Association later that year (Lu, 2017).

Recent years have seen increased emphasis on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, leading to renewed support and attention for traditional weaving techniques. For instance, a large piece of brocade was exhibited in Hong Kong in 2007 to mark the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return, setting a world record. In 2010, the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Research Institute expanded and renovated a factory building to 300 checkered meters, enhancing production capacity. The institute also established the "Guangxi Zhuang Brocade Product Enterprise Standard," filed with the Nanning Technical Supervision Bureau, further supporting the

industry's development (Fan & Gao, 2021). Furthermore, the Guangxi government organized experts to review projects submitted by various cities and proposed a list of projects for the third batch of intangible cultural heritage at the autonomous region level, including Zhuang brocade techniques (Xincheng Zhuang brocade technique, Binyang brocade technique). In 2011, the "Xincheng Zhuang Brocade Technique Training Class" was successfully launched, jointly organized by the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Research Institute, Laibin Cultural Bureau, and Xincheng Tusi Museum. In March of the same year, Guangxi Jinzhuangjin Cultural Art Co., Ltd. took the lead in establishing Guangxi's first private institution for researching ethnic embroidery and weaving—the Guangxi Embroidery and Weaving Development Research Association. They organized training for nearly one thousand embroidery and weaving women from 11 ethnic minorities in 23 villages across Guangxi, providing a "home" for embroidery and weaving artisans scattered across the region.

Although the traditional textile industry still faces numerous challenges, it is believed that with the collective efforts of the government and various sectors of society, this ethnic treasure will once again shine brightly.

The journey to revive this unique craft, while challenging, is also hopeful. Recent years have seen a boost in cultural confidence and a focus on intangible cultural heritage, helping this traditional textile enter a broader stage and become a significant showcase of ethnic culture.

To support the continuation and growth of this craft, the Guangxi government and relevant departments have implemented a series of effective measures. They have increased awareness through publicity, exhibitions, and cultural exchanges, while also encouraging and supporting the training of new artisans to ensure the skill is preserved and passed on.

In terms of market development, efforts are being made to modernize. Some enterprises have begun integrating traditional techniques with contemporary design to create new products that cater to current aesthetic and market demands. These innovations have enriched the product range and improved market competitiveness, opening new avenues for the industry's growth.

Additionally, Guangxi has strengthened collaborations with institutions and enterprises both domestically and internationally, promoting the protection and advancement of traditional techniques. By introducing advanced technology and management practices, the industry has enhanced production processes and product quality while preserving its unique characteristics.

The rise of the internet and e-commerce platforms has also expanded market opportunities. Traditional textiles are now being sold online, allowing more consumers to discover and purchase these products. This shift not only presents new

growth opportunities but also enables a wider audience to appreciate the cultural uniqueness of this craft.

Looking ahead, the path to reviving this traditional craft remains long, but with continued joint efforts from the government, businesses, and society, this national treasure is expected to bring renewed vitality and continue to represent the rich diversity and uniqueness of Chinese culture. The revival of this textile will also contribute to local economic development and cultural prosperity, helping Guangxi achieve greater advancements.

In summary, as a cultural treasure, this traditional textile has been passed down and developed over thousands of years. From its legendary origins to modern revitalization, it reflects the exceptional textile skills and aesthetic sensibilities of its creators, carrying deep cultural heritage and national sentiment. Despite the challenges posed by modernization, the craft has been revived through increased protection and concerted efforts, bridging the past and future.

4.2 Symbols and social function of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

4.2.1 Symbols of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

As an important handicraft of the Zhuang people, this traditional weaving art carries rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. The aim of this section is to analyze in-depth the patterns and color symbols in Longzhou brocade through the theoretical frameworks of semiotics and cultural semiotics, revealing the cultural allegories and deeper meanings behind them. To this end, the researcher adopted a qualitative research method, conducting an extensive field survey in Longzhou, Guangxi, and analyzing the findings using observation scales, interview outlines, the semiotic theory of energy and reference, Geertz's theory of cultural symbols, and other tools to uncover the intricate cultural significance of these textiles.

This section first outlines the diversity of the patterns and their symbolic meanings, which include elements such as natural scenery, animals, character stories, and myths. Using the theory of energy and reference in semiotics, it classifies and analyzes the symbols found in geometric decorations, botanical motifs, mythological and animal figures, and Chinese characters, revealing the specific form of each symbol and its profound connotation in the culture.

Meanwhile, through Geertz's theory of cultural semiotics, cultural phenomena such as nature worship, reproduction worship, and totemism are further analyzed, demonstrating how these motifs serve as symbols conveying the worldview, values, and aesthetic orientation of the Zhuang community.

In terms of color, this section explores the use of red, yellow, blue, green, black, and white within the fabric, noting that these colors not only enhance the visual impact but also reflect the community's aspirations and pursuit of a better life. A

comprehensive analysis of the symbols found in Longzhou brocade not only enriches our understanding of the culture but also provides valuable insights for the preservation and development of ethnic heritage.



Figure 11 Different types of patterns on Zhuang brocade

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

4.2.1.1 Categories of decorative motifs and their cultural significance

The core concept of a symbol can be defined as a specific mark or signal that represents or indicates something or a concept. It broadly covers various forms such as words, images, sounds, and actions, constituting the basic units of human thinking and communication. The field of semiotics is extremely broad, and symbols are thus subdivided into multiple types. Among them, Peirce's logical-rhetorical model provides an important reference framework for the classification of symbols. He divides symbols into three major categories: icons, indices, and symbols (Peirce, 1931-1958). Icons represent specific things by simulating the appearance or characteristics of objects, such as portrait paintings; indices have direct causal or spatiotemporal connections with the objects they represent, such as road signs; and symbols represent specific meanings through conventional rules, such as vocabulary in language.

Regarding the classification system of symbols, we can also draw on the views of Roland Barthes, who divides symbols into denotation and connotation (Barthes, 1964). Denotation represents the direct, literal meaning of a symbol, while

connotation implies the deeper meanings behind the symbol, such as cultural, historical, or emotional connotations. This classification is particularly important for analyzing the semiotic characteristics of Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns, as Zhuang brocade patterns not only have direct decorative functions but also carry rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings.

In the theoretical framework of semiotics, the signifier and the signified constitute the two core elements of a symbol. The signifier, the intuitive form or material carrier of a symbol, is the part that can be directly perceived. The signified, on the other hand, is the meaning, concept, or idea contained or represented by the symbol, what is understood and associated with through the symbol. This pair of concepts was first proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure in his linguistic research and was later widely applied in the field of semiotics (Saussure, 1916). In the symbolic system of Longzhou brocade, various patterns and colors serve as signifiers, while the cultural implications and symbolic meanings they contain form the signified. For example, the patterns of dragons and phoenixes are common signifiers, symbolizing power and strength, good fortune, and happiness, which are the specific contents of their signified meanings.

Furthermore, Yuri Lotman's theory of the semiosphere can be introduced to analyze the semiotic characteristics of these traditional textiles. Lotman believes that symbols do not exist in isolation but within a semiosphere composed of multiple symbols. These elements are interrelated and mutually influential, together forming a complex symbolic system (Lotman, 1977). In the semiosphere of these woven pieces, patterns, colors, and weaving techniques are interconnected, collectively constituting a unique symbolic system.

The symbolic system of this art form is extremely rich and diverse, covering various aspects such as nature, life, and culture. These symbols include animal and plant motifs (such as dragons, phoenixes, butterflies, and fish), geometric designs, and color combinations with specific meanings. These symbols not only decorate the fabric but also embody the community's love and reverence for nature, life, and culture, reflecting a profound cultural heritage.



Figure 12 An inheritor of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship explaining Zhuang brocade patterns to researcher

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

4.2.1.1.1 Geometric pattern symbols

Geometric decorative patterns constitute a major category within the traditional designs of Longzhou textiles. The primary geometric motifs include checkered, rhombus, circular, and cloud-thunder patterns. These designs are based on simple geometric shapes, which are transformed into complex yet orderly arrangements through repetition, combination, and aesthetic principles such as symmetry and balance. The patterns feature clear, concise shapes with rigorous and standardized structures, offering not only high decorative value but also deep cultural significance and aesthetic appeal. The application of geometric patterns in this weaving tradition reflects the community's profound understanding of nature and life, as well as their exceptional weaving expertise and artistic sensibilities.

From a semiotic perspective, geometric decorative patterns can be regarded as visual symbols that convey specific cultural information and aesthetic imagery through the combination of shapes, lines, colors, and other elements. These patterns not only serve a decorative function but also carry rich symbolic meanings and cultural connotations. For instance, checkered patterns may represent the Zhuang

people's love and reverence for the land, while swirling patterns may symbolize the cyclical and eternal nature of life.

Furthermore, the extensive use of geometric decorative patterns in Zhuang brocade also demonstrates the Zhuang people's exquisite mastery of spatial layout and visual effects. Through ingenious pattern design and color matching, they create a harmonious and unified aesthetic on the visual level, thereby enhancing the artistic charm and aesthetic value of Zhuang brocade. This exquisite handling of space and visual effects not only reflects the Zhuang people's aesthetic pursuits but also showcases their remarkable achievements in weaving craftsmanship. Therefore, the application of geometric decorative patterns in Zhuang brocade is not only a manifestation of decorative techniques but also a transmission and expression of culture and aesthetics.

4.2.1.1.1 Checkered pattern



Figure 13 Checkered pattern 1

Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)



Figure 14 Checkered pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

The checkered pattern, as a major category of geometric decorative motifs in this traditional weaving art, possesses unique charm and profound cultural connotations. With its simplicity and exquisite beauty, it plays a significant role in Longzhou textiles. The checkered pattern features a simple form and a clear structure, consisting of multiple small squares arranged and combined according to certain rules, evoking a sense of stability and harmony. Often used as a background or border, this design merges with other elements to create a rich and colorful decorative effect, enhancing the overall artistic charm and aesthetic value of the fabric.

The formation of the checkered pattern is relatively straightforward, primarily achieved through the intersection of warp and weft threads during the weaving process, forming regular small squares. Weavers skillfully adjust the density and colors of the threads according to design requirements, producing checkered patterns of varying sizes and hues. This method is not only simple to execute but also highly adaptable, making the checkered motif widely used and an indispensable part of this art form.

The extensive application of the checkered pattern is not solely due to its aesthetically pleasing appearance but also because of the cultural meanings it conveys. In local traditions, the checkered motif may symbolize concepts such as land,

homeland, and order. Land represents the foundation of the people's survival, homeland is their spiritual refuge, and order ensures social harmony and stability. The presence of this design can thus be seen as a reflection of the community's respect for and pursuit of these essential values. Its use is not merely a decorative technique but also a transmission and expression of cultural and aesthetic ideals.

From a semiotic perspective, the checkered pattern can be regarded as a visual symbol that carries specific cultural information and aesthetic imagery. In Zhuang brocade, the checkered pattern may represent a sense of order, stability, and harmony, which are closely connected to the lifestyle and values of the Zhuang people. As a geometric shape, the checkered pattern also possesses a certain level of abstraction and symbolism. It can evoke profound thoughts about nature, the universe, and life, embodying humanity's pursuit of order, harmony, and beauty. This pursuit is perfectly embodied in the checkered pattern, making Zhuang brocade not only a practical handicraft but also an artwork rich in cultural connotations and aesthetic value.

The checkered pattern, as a major category of geometric decorative patterns in Zhuang brocade, possesses unique charm and profound cultural connotations. It is not only aesthetically pleasing, easy to form, and widely used, but also carries rich cultural information and aesthetic imagery.

4.2.1.1.2 Rhombus pattern



Figure 15 Rhombus pattern 1

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)



Figure 16 Rhombus pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

The rhombus pattern in Zhuang brocade, as a frequently occurring and distinctive geometric motif, not only carries profound cultural connotations but also demonstrates the unique aesthetic pursuits and exquisite weaving skills of the Zhuang people.

The rhombus pattern, shaped like a rhombus, is an equilateral quadrilateral with four angles facing each other, presenting a visually stable and harmonious beauty. In Zhuang brocade, the rhombus pattern is usually presented in a regular geometric form, constructed by the intersection of warp and weft threads. By adjusting the density and colors of the warp and weft threads, a clear and vivid rhombus pattern is woven. At the same time, there are variant forms of the rhombus pattern, such as two rhombus patterns overlapping at their corners to form a "double happiness" pattern, which is particularly common in Zhuang brocade and symbolizes "eternal unity and never parting." Additionally, the rhombus pattern is often used as a framework with other patterns like flowers and animals filling the interior, forming complex and orderly composite patterns that further enrich the decorative effect of Zhuang brocade.

The formation and evolution of the rhombus pattern are full of wisdom and creativity. According to research, it originated from the inspiration drawn by ancient Zhuang ancestors from their practice of mat weaving. Over the course of history, the

rhombus pattern has gradually evolved from a single geometric shape into multiple variants and combined with other patterns, forming a rich and diverse array of Zhuang brocade designs. This evolution process not only reflects the creativity of the Zhuang people but also demonstrates their pursuit of beauty and love for life.

The extensive application of the rhombus pattern in Longzhou weaving art is not only due to its aesthetically pleasing appearance but also because of the cultural connotations and symbolic meanings it carries. As a geometric motif, the rhombus pattern features simplicity, clarity, and repetitive order, aligning with the community's pursuit of harmony and unity. In their culture, the rhombus may symbolize imagery such as land and homeland, representing a stable and prosperous life. At the same time, it is also imbued with symbolic meanings of good fortune and happiness, embodying the people's aspirations for a better life. Therefore, this motif is not merely a decorative technique but also a medium for expressing cultural and aesthetic values.

In practical applications, the diamond pattern has become the preferred choice for artisans due to its unique charm and wide adaptability. For example, in the eight-pointed star motif, the diamond serves as the main framework, with geometric patterns like eight-pointed stars filling the interior, creating a lively and rhythmic design. This approach enhances the artistic appeal and elevates the aesthetic value of the textile. In the swastika-patterned brocade, the diamond motif is also skillfully integrated. Through the combination and contrast of different color blocks, it creates a fresh, unique, and stable effect. This application further enriches the decorative techniques and expressive forms of traditional weaving.

With time, the rhombus pattern has gradually merged with modern design, taking on new vitality. In contemporary visual design, designers often draw inspiration from this traditional motif, incorporating it into various fields such as brand logos, packaging, and fashion. This combination not only deepens the cultural connotations and aesthetic value of modern design but also provides new avenues for the preservation and development of traditional weaving techniques. Through the power of modern design, the rhombus pattern finds broader application, allowing more people to understand and appreciate this unique craft.

4.2.1.1.3 Circular pattern



Figure 17 Circular pattern

Source: Luo Yonteng (2024)

The circular pattern in Longzhou weaving, as a classic geometric design, not only reflects the community's abstraction and refinement of natural forms but also carries rich cultural implications and aesthetic value. These circular motifs have distinct characteristics, with the circle as the basic form. They may appear individually or in combination with other geometric shapes, animals, and plant elements, creating a diverse and visually appealing decorative effect. The edges of these patterns are typically smooth and flowing, with a full, symmetrical shape, providing a harmonious and complete visual impression. In terms of color, circular designs often feature bright tones for filling or outlining, adding vibrancy and highlighting ethnic characteristics.

Beyond its decorative function, the circular motif carries deep cultural significance. In traditional culture, the circle symbolizes perfection, harmony, completeness, and infinite cycles, all of which are embodied in this design. The local community expresses their aspirations for a better life through these patterns, which also reflect their reverence for nature. Circular designs are frequently combined with other auspicious symbols, such as lotus flowers, phoenixes, and bats, creating composite motifs that represent good fortune, happiness, and longevity.

From a semiotic perspective, the circular pattern is a visual symbol imbued with specific meaning. According to Peirce's theory, this design acts as the "representative term," pointing to an "object," whether a real circular form or an abstract concept, and conveys rich cultural meanings through the "interpretant," which is shaped by people's understanding and interpretation. Specifically, the circular motif often symbolizes auspiciousness, harmony, and completeness. This symbolic meaning is not arbitrary

but rooted in the cultural traditions and aesthetic values of the community. Through the clever use of these motifs, the weavers express their vision and pursuit of a better life, forming a distinctive artistic style.

Meanwhile, the meaning of the circular pattern is not fixed but evolves and enriches with changes in time, space, and cultural context. Different interpreters will provide different interpretations and explanations of the circular pattern based on their cultural backgrounds, aesthetic tastes, and cognitive experiences, thus endowing it with new meanings and values.

4.2.1.1.4 Cloud and thunder pattern

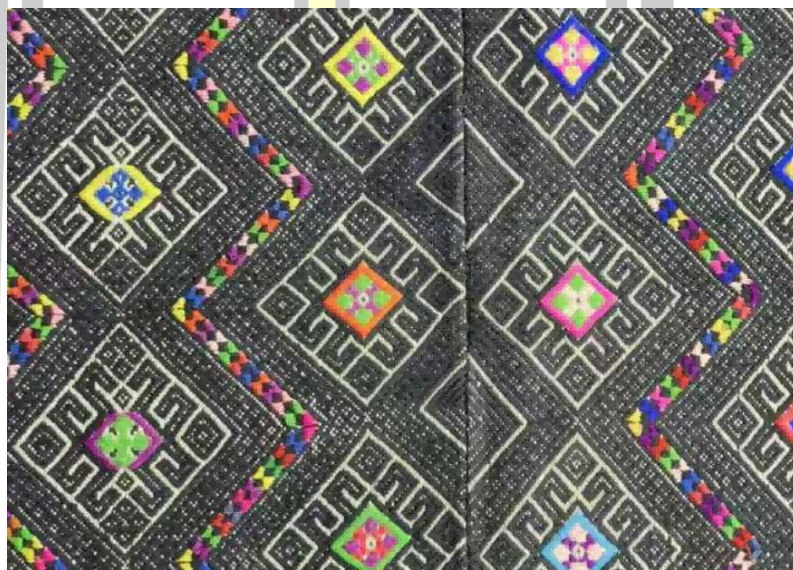


Figure 18 Cloud and thunder pattern

Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)

The cloud and thunder pattern in Zhuang brocade holds a pivotal position among Zhuang patterns as a geometric motif with profound cultural connotations and unique aesthetic value. The following is a detailed introduction to the cloud and thunder pattern in Zhuang brocade, including its appearance, cultural connotations, and theoretical extensions.

The cloud and thunder pattern, as the name suggests, is a composite motif combining two elements: cloud pattern and thunder pattern. Its fundamental characteristic is the continuous "looping" lines, which are smooth and rhythmic.

The cloud pattern is typically composed of gentle, swirling lines with variable forms. Some are as elegant as floating clouds and flowing water, while others are as mysterious as mist and clouds swirling around. In composition, the cloud pattern often unfolds in a continuous form, either in a four-way or two-way continuous pattern, creating an uninterrupted visual effect. Its lines are delicate and uniform, with diverse

variations, including single curls, double curls, half curls, and wave-like connections (Li, 2020).

The thunder pattern is based on checkered patterns, with angular and forceful lines, often formed by several layers of nested checkered patterns of different sizes, resulting in various graceful motifs. These thunder patterns include elliptical thunder patterns, small checkered "looping" thunder patterns, rhombus-shaped thunder patterns, half thunder patterns, each exhibiting different morphological features and decorative effects (Li, 2020).

When combined, the cloud and thunder patterns complement, transform, and accentuate each other, collectively forming the unique composite motif of the cloud and thunder pattern. In Zhuang brocade, the cloud and thunder pattern often appears as a background or border, enhancing the theme motifs and adding to the overall aesthetic appeal and decorative effect of the fabric.

The cloud and thunder pattern carries rich symbolic meanings and cultural connotations in Zhuang culture. In the minds of ancient people, the cloud and thunder pattern was a symbol of status and divinity, representing continuity and endless vitality. It embodies the primitive ancestors' worship of nature and their aspirations for a better life.

Nature Worship: As common phenomena in nature, clouds and thunder were seen by the ancestors of the Zhuang people as mysterious and powerful forces. The use of the cloud and thunder pattern reflects the Zhuang ancestors' worship and awe of the cloud and thunder deities.

Auspicious Implications: With its continuous form and endless vitality, the cloud and thunder pattern is endowed with auspicious wishes such as good fortune, happiness, and well-being. In Zhuang brocade, the cloud and thunder pattern is often combined with other motifs to form pattern combinations with profound implications.

From a semiotic perspective, the cloud and thunder pattern, as a symbol, has two layers of meaning: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the specific pattern form, i.e., the combination of cloud and thunder patterns, while the signified refers to the cultural connotations and symbolic meanings represented by these patterns (Zhao, 2012). Through its unique form and rich cultural connotations, the cloud and thunder pattern has become one of the important symbols in Zhuang culture.

4.2.1.1.2 Plant pattern symbols

from natural elements such as flowers, grasses, and trees commonly found in daily life. Symbols like star anise flowers, chrysanthemums, pomegranate blossoms, peonies, gourds, and bamboo are frequently used. These designs are characterized by their varied shapes, delicate lines, vibrant colors, and strong decorative appeal. As cultural symbols, they deeply reflect the community's aspirations for a better life,

along with rich cultural meanings and profound significance. These motifs not only form an integral part of the textile art but also serve as symbolic expressions of the harmonious relationship between local traditions and nature.



Figure 19 Octagonal pattern of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)

4.2.1.1.2.1 Octagonal pattern



Figure 20 Octagonal pattern

Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)

The octagonal pattern, as the name suggests, is a geometric figure formed by eight acute angles extending evenly outward. Its overall structure is stable and

symmetrical, exuding a sense of aesthetic beauty. In Zhuang brocade, octagonal pattern is often used as the main decorative motif, combined with rhombus shapes, geometric patterns, flower patterns, etc., to form a rich and colorful pattern combination. Its lines are smooth and tense, its colors are bright and harmonious, giving a strong visual impact.

In Zhuang brocade, the application of the eight-pointed star pattern is very extensive and flexible. It can appear as a central motif alone or be combined with other motifs to form complex patterns. For example, in some Zhuang brocade works, octagonal pattern is cleverly integrated into a rhombus framework to form a rhombus-shaped eight-pointed star pattern; or it is intertwined with geometric patterns and flower patterns to form a richly layered and profound pattern combination. These patterns are not only decorative but also carry the Zhuang people's good wishes and aspirations for life.

According to Fan Daozhi's (2019) research, octagonal pattern is also known as the "cherry blossom pattern" or "sun pattern" in Longzhou, linking this motif to the appearance of star anise fruits grown locally. Some villagers believe that the emergence of octagonal pattern originates from the star anise fruits they frequently see in their daily lives. Additionally, in the local area, due to the high yield and numerous seeds of star anise, it is often used as a symbol of fertility and prosperity.

4.2.1.1.2.2 Chrysanthemum pattern



Figure 21 Chrysanthemum pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The chrysanthemum patterns in traditional textile designs are often outlined with delicate lines, highlighting the layered and well-arranged petal structure of the flower. These petals may be curled or outstretched, presenting different forms that harmonize

to create a unique rhythmic beauty. Artists frequently use vivid and coordinated color combinations like purple, yellow, and white, making the chrysanthemum motifs particularly striking and vibrant against the fabric. Additionally, these floral designs are often combined with other elements, such as phoenixes and cloud motifs, together forming intricate works imbued with auspicious meanings.

From a semiotic perspective, the chrysanthemum patterns are not merely decorative but part of a symbolic system that carries deep cultural connotations. According to Saussure's theory, a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. Here, the signifier is the specific visual image—the morphology, colors, and lines of the chrysanthemum—while the signified is the meaning the flower represents, such as longevity, auspiciousness, and nobility in the local culture. This combination makes the chrysanthemum a symbol with specific cultural significance. Peirce's semiotic theory further emphasizes the symbolic nature of signs, suggesting that this pattern represents ideas beyond its physical form. In the community, chrysanthemums are associated with resilience, noble qualities, and enduring life. These meanings are conveyed through the visual image of the flower, enabling viewers to appreciate both its cultural and spiritual significance.

Morris's communication theory suggests that signs are basic units of information dissemination. As a cultural sign, the chrysanthemum pattern helps reinforce identity and tradition within the community and beyond. Through the transmission of this floral motif, people not only celebrate their heritage but also share it, ensuring its continuation.

their cultural identity and aesthetic concepts but also engage in cultural exchanges and mutual learning with other ethnic groups.

4.2.1.1.2.3 Peony pattern



Figure 22 Peony pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The peony patterns in Zhuang brocade exhibit the elegance and grandeur of peony flowers through their blooming posture. These peony motifs often feature full and rounded petals as the main body, with layers of petals arranged in an orderly manner, vibrant and rich in color, commonly using hues such as red, pink, and purple, symbolizing wealth and prosperity. The form of the peony flower is delicately outlined in Zhuang brocade, with smooth and varied lines that not only showcase the natural beauty of the peony but also incorporate the artistic ingenuity of the craftspeople. Furthermore, peony patterns are often combined with other elements in Zhuang brocade, such as phoenix patterns, butterfly patterns, and cloud patterns, forming patterns with profound meanings, such as "Phoenix Passing Through Peony" and "Butterfly in Love with Flower," further enhancing the artistic charm of Zhuang brocade.

From a semiotic perspective, the peony patterns in traditional textiles are not merely decorative motifs but part of a symbolic system with rich cultural connotations and meanings. According to Saussure's semiotic theory, the signifier is the specific visual representation—the morphology, colors, and lines of the peony flower—while the signified refers to the meanings attributed to the peony in local and broader Chinese culture, such as wealth, auspiciousness, and happiness. This interplay of signifier and signified makes the peony pattern a visual sign with particular cultural significance. Peirce's semiotic theory emphasizes the symbolic nature of signs, suggesting that the peony pattern carries deep and profound meanings. In traditional Chinese culture, the peony is celebrated as the "King of Flowers," symbolizing prosperity, wealth, and a good life. This symbolism is conveyed through the visual representation of the peony motif, allowing viewers to appreciate both its aesthetic beauty and its cultural significance.

Morris's communication theory posits that signs are fundamental units of information dissemination. As a cultural sign, the peony pattern helps communicate cultural values and identity within the community and beyond. Through the display of this floral motif, people are able to convey their cultural heritage and shared aspirations, enriching the appreciation of traditional textiles. broader Chinese cultural sphere, promoting cultural identity and inheritance. Through the dissemination of the peony pattern in Zhuang brocade, people can not only express their aspirations and pursuits of a good life but also strengthen their sense of identity and pride in their ethnic culture.

4.2.1.1.2.4 Bamboo pattern



Figure 23 Bamboo pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The bamboo patterns on Zhuang brocade are usually delicately outlined through the interweaving of warp and weft threads, showcasing the morphology of bamboo. These patterns often feature upright bamboo stems as the main body, accompanied by well-arranged bamboo leaves, exhibiting the tenacious and vigorous vitality of bamboo. The lines of the bamboo patterns are smooth and varied, reflecting the rhythm of bamboo's natural growth while also demonstrating the craftspeople's superb weaving skills. In terms of color, the bamboo patterns primarily use green hues to mimic the natural color of bamboo, supplemented by other colors for embellishment, making the patterns more vivid and colorful.

From a semiotic perspective, the bamboo patterns in traditional textiles are not merely decorative elements but part of a symbolic system with rich cultural connotations and meanings. According to Saussure's semiotic theory, the signifier is the specific visual representation—the morphology, lines, and colors of bamboo—while the signified refers to the meanings associated with bamboo in local and broader Chinese culture, such as virtues like tenacity and noble character. This interplay of signifier and signified makes the bamboo pattern a visual sign with particular cultural significance.

Peirce's semiotic theory highlights the symbolic nature of signs, suggesting that the bamboo motif carries deep and profound meanings. In traditional Chinese culture, bamboo is celebrated as one of the "Four Gentlemen," symbolizing virtues such as purity, tenacity, and humility. These symbolic meanings are conveyed through the

visual depiction of bamboo, allowing viewers to appreciate both its aesthetic qualities and the moral values it represents.

Morris's communication theory posits that signs are fundamental units of information dissemination. As a cultural symbol, the bamboo pattern is shared within the local community and the broader Chinese cultural sphere, promoting cultural identity and continuity. Through the display of this motif, people gain insight into the aesthetic concepts and cultural traditions of the community, enhancing their understanding of the rich traditional culture of the Chinese nation.

4.2.1.1.2.5 Gourd pattern



Figure 24 Gourd pattern

Source: Lu Qiong(2017)

The gourd pattern in Zhuang brocade, as one of the traditional Chinese auspicious symbols, not only carries profound cultural connotations but also occupies an important position in Zhuang brocade art with its unique morphological beauty and rich symbolic meanings. The representation of the gourd pattern in Zhuang brocade is based on the shape of a conventional gourd, consisting of two enlarged, rounded sections on the top and bottom with a concave middle. The upper part is generally smaller than the lower part, presenting a full and rounded visual effect overall. The protrusion at the top of the gourd body forms the gourd mouth, which is simple in form yet retains a substantial charm. The design of the gourd pattern often features bilateral symmetry and balanced weight distribution, which not only confers visual stability but also implies the aesthetic concept of harmony and balance. Additionally, the gourd pattern is often adorned with auspicious characters or motifs such as "Fu"

(fortune), "Lu" (prosperity), and "Shou" (longevity), further enhancing its auspicious implications.

From a semiotic perspective, the gourd pattern, as a visual sign, carries rich cultural meanings and symbolic values. According to Peirce's semiotic theory, the gourd pattern serves as the "representative term," pointing to the "object," the actual gourd, and conveys a wealth of auspicious implications and cultural connotations through the "interpretant," which is people's cognition and interpretation. Specifically, the gourd pattern holds multiple symbolic meanings in Zhuang brocade art. Firstly, it symbolizes the worship of life. As a fruit in nature, the gourd's characteristics of numerous seeds and vigorous vitality symbolize the reproduction of life and the prosperity of the family at the symbolic level. In Zhuang brocade art, the gourd pattern is often used to express people's good wishes for the continuation of life and the prosperity of the family. Secondly, the gourd pattern implies auspicious blessings. The homophonic sound of "gourd" with "FuLu" (fortune and prosperity) makes the gourd pattern a symbol of auspiciousness, happiness, and longevity in traditional culture. The gourd pattern in Zhuang brocade, combined with other auspicious elements such as bats and peonies, further reinforces such auspicious implications, forming a series of pattern combinations with composite meanings. Lastly, the gourd pattern also embodies aesthetic value. Its simple yet charming form can create a harmonious and unified overall effect when combined with other patterns in Zhuang brocade. In a semiotic sense, this combination not only satisfies people's aesthetic needs but also reflects the high degree of unity between form and content in Zhuang brocade art.

As one of the traditional Chinese auspicious symbols, the gourd pattern in Zhuang brocade is widely used in various fields such as folk paper-cutting, embroidery, New Year paintings, architectural decoration, and more. In Zhuang brocade art, the gourd pattern, with its unique morphological beauty and rich cultural connotations, has become one of the favorite elements for designers. With the development of time, the gourd pattern in Zhuang brocade continues to grow and evolve in inheritance and innovation, serving as a cultural bridge connecting the past and the future.

4.2.1.1.3 Mythological and animal pattern symbols

Animal patterns in Zhuang brocade refer to the decorative motifs formed during the weaving process through the intertwining of warp and weft yarns, which exhibit animal forms or characteristics. These patterns are inspired by animals in nature and undergo artistic processing and transformation to become unique decorative elements on Zhuang brocade. They are not only visually appealing but also carry profound cultural connotations and symbolic meanings.

Animal patterns are named as such because these motifs directly use animals as their design prototypes, vividly represented on the fabric through brocade techniques. In Zhuang culture, many animals are seen as creatures with special significance or symbolic value. Therefore, weaving these animal images into Zhuang brocade is not only for decorative purposes but also to express people's emotions and aspirations.

The weaving process of animal patterns in Zhuang brocade is complex and intricate. First, cotton is spun into cotton yarn as the warp, and silk is obtained from silkworm cocoons as the weft. Both are dyed according to the color requirements of the pattern. Then, the warp yarn is rolled into a cylindrical shape and placed at the back of the loom, with two layers of warp yarn pulled forward to the cloth roll axis and fixed, passing through the heddles and ground shafts. The weft yarn is wound around a weft tube and placed in a shuttle for later use. The next step is to prepare the pattern template, which is a crucial step in determining the Zhuang brocade pattern. According to the designed animal pattern, the corresponding pattern template specifications are prepared, and yarns of various colors are arranged. Finally, following the instructions of the pattern template and the requirements of the pattern, the interlacing of the weft yarn and the change of colors are controlled through the jacquard device, gradually weaving out the pattern with animal forms.

There is a wide variety of animal patterns in Zhuang brocade, commonly featuring designs such as the phoenix pattern, loong/python-loong pattern, frog pattern, tiger pattern, bird pattern, and butterfly pattern. The phoenix pattern is derived from the phoenix prototype, with a streamlined and simple design that varies in form, symbolizing good fortune and prosperity. The loong/python-loong pattern is designed with the loong or python as its prototype, featuring edges outlined by octagons and hexagons, with embedded geometric patterns and bird and beast patterns, forming a continuous abstract composition pattern. The frog pattern is derived from the frog, an animal worshipped by the Zhuang people, and exhibits unique abstract or representational forms. Additionally, there are lion patterns, tiger patterns, chicken patterns, qilin patterns, etc., each designed with a different animal as its prototype and possessing unique forms and symbolic meanings. Butterfly patterns and fish patterns are also common animal motifs, symbolizing freedom and beauty, as well as harvest and abundance, respectively. These animal patterns not only enrich the content of Zhuang brocade patterns but also demonstrate the Zhuang people's love and admiration for animals in nature, as well as their aspirations and pursuits for a better life.

4.2.1.1.3.1 Loong Pattern

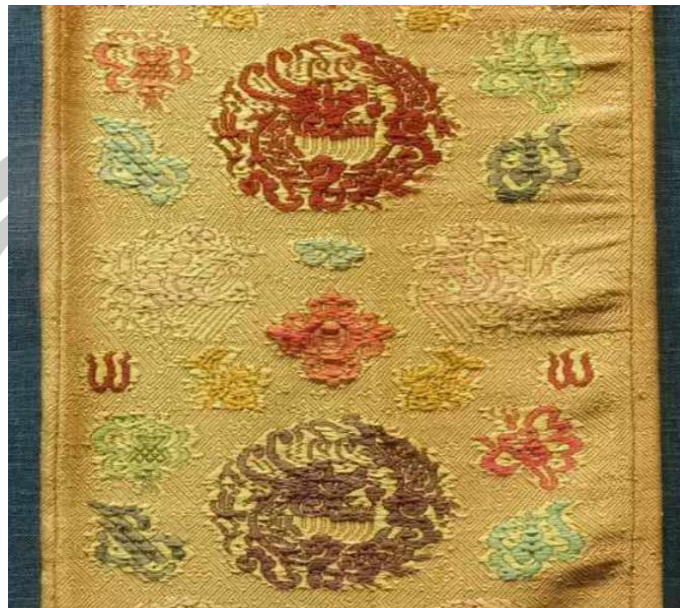


Figure 25 Loong pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)



Figure 26 Loong in Chinese mythological stories

Source: PNG material website: <https://www.pngsucai.com>:(2024)

The loong, in ancient Chinese mythology and legends, is a mystical and majestic divine beast, honored as the "chief of scaled creatures" and one of the symbols of the Chinese nation. Its image typically integrates features of various animals: deer antlers, ox head, donkey mouth, shrimp eyes, elephant ears, fish scales, serpent body, eagle claws, etc. These features together form the loong's unique and majestic appearance. In Chinese culture, the loong represents power, wisdom, and nobility, symbolizing good fortune and luck. It is often associated with emperors, symbolizing imperial power, and appears in various artistic forms such as paintings, sculptures, architecture, and folklore, deeply loved and respected by people.

The loong pattern in Zhuang brocade, as a classic motif, not only displays the superb weaving skills of the Zhuang people but also contains profound cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. The loong pattern, often referred to as the python-loong pattern, is inspired by the images of loongs or pythons in nature, which are usually depicted with long and winding bodies, scale-covered skin, majestic loong heads, and sharp loong claws. Through artistic processing and transformation, these loong images are converted into unique pattern motifs.

The edge contour of the python-loong pattern is carefully composed of octagons and hexagons. These geometric shapes not only enhance the pattern's sense of layers and three-dimensionality but also endow the python-loong pattern with a mysterious and solemn aura. Inside the edge contour, various patterns such as dot patterns, cloud-thunder patterns, octagonal geometric patterns, stripe patterns, and bird-beast patterns are embedded, interwoven and well-arranged, collectively forming the complex and intricate pattern structure of the python-loong pattern. The overall form of the python-loong pattern is lifelike, resembling a giant loong winding and hovering on the surface of the brocade, exuding a magnificent aura and sense of power.

From a semiotic perspective, the python-loong pattern in traditional textiles is not merely a decorative element but a symbol system with profound cultural connotations and meanings. In semiotics, the signifier refers to the material form of a symbol—the aspect that people perceive—while the signified denotes the concept or meaning represented by the symbol. In this case, the signifier is the visual motif of the python-loong pattern on the fabric, while the signified represents the community's reverence for the loong and the associated symbols of nobility, power, and good fortune.

The python-loong design not only offers intuitive visual appeal but also carries rich symbolic and metaphorical meanings. In traditional Chinese culture, the loong is a symbol of good fortune and power. By incorporating the loong motif into their textiles, the community not only expresses admiration for the loong totem but also showcases their own cultural strength and wisdom. The integration of various patterns within the python-loong motif reflects their aspirations and pursuit of an improved life.

Moreover, as a significant aspect of local heritage, the python-loong pattern holds historical and cultural significance. Through this symbolic system, the community conveys their identity and cultural belonging, reinforcing cohesion and unity within their group.

4.2.1.1.3.2 Phoenix pattern



Figure 27 Phoenix pattern 1

Source: Luo Yingteng(2024)



Figure 28 Phoenix pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The phoenix, as a mythical bird in ancient Chinese legends, is honored as the "King of Birds" and occupies a pivotal position in Chinese culture. Its image is usually depicted with a chicken's head, a snake's neck, a swallow's jaw, a tortoise's back, and a fish's tail, adorned with colorful feathers, beautiful and mysterious. In the cultures of ethnic minorities such as the Zhuang, the phoenix is even more regarded as a symbol of good fortune, happiness, and beauty, often appearing in various artistic forms and daily life. For instance, the image of the phoenix is incorporated into the patterns of Zhuang brocade, carrying profound cultural connotations and symbolic meanings.

The phoenix patterns in Zhuang brocade, whether concrete or abstract, possess great artistic charm. The concrete phoenix patterns are characterized by their simplicity, purity, and directness, often retaining the essential features of the phoenix, such as the "chicken-like head," "snake-like neck," and "five-colored plumage." These details are vividly reproduced in Zhuang brocade. The head of the phoenix resembles a chicken's head, with a slender and curved neck, broad and ornate wings, and an artistically exaggerated tail that extends gracefully, creating an overall form that is elegant and mysterious. Furthermore, the intricate depictions of the phoenix's eyes and mouth are lifelike, demonstrating the exceptional skill of the brocade artisans and their pursuit of beauty.

The abstract phoenix patterns, on the other hand, are even more free-spirited and unrestricted by the specific form of the phoenix. Instead, they employ combinations of geometric shapes and lines to create highly generalized and symbolic patterns. These patterns often do not possess the complete features of a phoenix but convey its essence and auspicious meanings through simplification, deformation, and other techniques. For example, the "Four Phoenixes" Zhuang brocade displays the posture of a flying phoenix, while the "Cloud, Thunder, Fish, and Phoenix" pattern outlines the contour of a phoenix with just a few simplified lines, achieving simplicity without losing vitality.

From a semiotic perspective, the phoenix pattern in Zhuang brocade is not only a decorative motif but also an information carrier with rich cultural significance. According to Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, a sign is composed of two parts: the signifier and the signified. In the phoenix pattern of Zhuang brocade, the signifier refers to the specific form of the phoenix pattern, including concrete phoenix images and abstract geometric shapes; the signified refers to the cultural connotations and symbolic meanings represented by these forms, such as good fortune, wealth, and beauty.

Firstly, as a signifier, the unique morphological design of the phoenix pattern attracts people's attention and becomes one of the most eye-catching elements in

Zhuang brocade. Concrete phoenix patterns, through fine depiction, directly showcase the beauty and majesty of the phoenix; abstract phoenix patterns, through geometric processing, create a simplistic yet profound visual effect. These diverse phoenix patterns collectively constitute the rich and colorful pattern world of Zhuang brocade.

Secondly, as a signified, the phoenix pattern carries rich cultural significance and symbolic value. In Zhuang culture, the phoenix is regarded as a symbol of good fortune, representing happiness, beauty, and longevity. Therefore, the use of the phoenix pattern in Zhuang brocade is not only the inheritance and promotion of this traditional concept but also a concrete embodiment of people's aspirations and wishes for a better life. At the same time, the phoenix pattern also reflects the Zhuang people's reverence and worship for nature and their pursuit of the concept of harmonious coexistence.

4.2.1.1.3.3 Bird pattern



Figure 29 Bird pattern 1

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

พหุ ประยุกต์ ชีว



Figure 30 Bird pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

According to Fan Daozhi (2019), the Zhuang people have regarded birds as their ancestors since ancient times, and have had a deep sense of worship for them. In the modern Zhuang language, the pronunciation of the word "bird" is similar to that of "Luo", so "Luo Yue" is also interpreted as "Bird Yue", implying that it is a bird-worshipping people. Therefore, the word "Luoyue" is also interpreted as "Bird Yue", implying that this is a clan with birds as totems. The "Yushen" is honoured as the "leader of birds", which implies the reproductive culture of the Zhuang "bird as ancestor". The ancestors of the Zhuang in Longzhou even cleverly weave the image of the bird into the Zhuang brocade to express their worship and admiration for the bird (i.e. their ancestors).

There are many kinds of bird patterns in Zhuang brocade, with different forms, but in general, they all reflect the pursuit of natural beauty and the hope of auspicious symbolism. Bird patterns are mostly presented in a combination of realism and abstraction, with both fine and subtle portrayals of birds, as well as a high degree of generalisation and simplification of forms. For example, the peacock motif symbolises beauty and pride with its unique open screen; the swallow motif symbolises freedom and agility with its light posture; and the mandarin duck motif conveys the beautiful symbolism of love and loyalty with its paired image. These bird patterns together constitute the colourful pattern world of Zhuang brocade.

From a semiotic perspective, the bird motif in traditional textiles is not just a decorative element but a symbol system rich in cultural meanings. Semiotics examines how symbols represent, convey, and interpret meanings. The bird patterns in these textiles reflect a deep understanding of nature, life, and good fortune through their specific forms, colors, and combinations. In semiotics, "energy" refers to the material form of a symbol—such as the bird motif—while "reference" pertains to the concept or meaning represented by the symbol, including auspiciousness, wealth, and

happiness. The bird motif effectively bridges the association between reference and energy through its distinctive design and color scheme. When viewers encounter this pattern, they naturally connect it with these positive symbols, thereby experiencing the unique charm of the culture.

The weaver of traditional textiles acts as a coder, encoding the symbolic system of the bird motif into the fabric through specific weaving techniques and pattern designs. The viewer, serving as a decoder, interprets the meaning of the bird pattern through visual perception and cultural background knowledge. This process highlights not only the transmission function of symbols but also the preservation and evolution of the culture.

The bird motif often functions as both a symbol and a metaphor. It represents good luck, wealth, and happiness, while also metaphorically reflecting the community's aspirations and pursuit of a better life. These motifs, with their distinctive forms and meanings, have become significant symbols within the culture and carriers of its heritage.

As time progresses, the bird motif has been preserved and developed within traditional crafts while also being integrated into modern design. For instance, in contemporary clothing design, the bird pattern has gained new vitality and expression, becoming a key element for showcasing ethnic flavor and innovative spirit. This modern application not only enriches the cultural connotations of design but also advances the heritage and promotion of the traditional craft.

4.2.1.1.3.4 Tiger pattern



Figure 31 Tiger pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

As a large beast in nature, the tiger, with its majestic image, powerful strength and fearlessness, has been the object of mankind's reverence and worship since ancient times. In the Zhuang culture, the tiger is regarded as a symbol of bravery, strength and good luck, and is deeply loved and respected by the people. In China, the tiger is considered the king of all beasts.

The tiger pattern on Zhuang brocade is often presented in a highly generalised and abstract way, which not only retains the basic features of the tiger, but also incorporates the creativity and imagination of the artist. The tiger pattern usually occupies a prominent position in the picture, with a powerful yet dynamic form, showing a harmonious unity of power and beauty. In terms of morphological structure, the tiger pattern often appears in a sideways or frontal position, with its head high and eyes rounded, revealing an air of unruffled authority. The tiger's body has smooth lines and a strong sense of muscle, especially the ridge line on the back, which outlines the tiger's strength and dynamics through a few concise strokes. The limbs are thick and powerful, with sharp claws, as if ready to pounce on the prey. The tiger's tail, on the other hand, is curled or fluttering, adding a bit of vividness and vitality to the whole pattern. In the use of colour, the Zhuang brocade is colourful and gorgeous, and the tiger pattern is no exception. Artists skilfully use the principles of contrast and harmony to make the tiger pattern stand out in the overall picture. The body of the tiger is mostly in warm colours such as bright red, yellow or orange, symbolising strength and majesty; while details such as eyes and markings may be embellished with cool colours such as black or dark blue, forming a sharp contrast and enhancing the three-dimensionality and layering of the pattern.

From the point of view of semiotics, the tiger pattern is not only a reproduction of the image of the tiger in nature, but also a kind of cultural symbol that carries rich symbolic meaning. The tiger is regarded as a symbol of bravery, strength and good luck in Zhuang culture, so the tiger pattern is often used to decorate clothing, bedding and other daily necessities, implying that the wearer or user can have the bravery and good luck of the tiger. The tiger pattern on Zhuang brocade is a typical symbolic system, which contains both energy (i.e. the tiger pattern itself) and reference (i.e. the cultural significance represented by the tiger). The operation of this symbol system depends on the common cultural cognition and emotional resonance of the Zhuang people. The referent of the tiger pattern is its specific pattern form, including the tiger's form, colours, lines and other visual elements. These elements, through the elaborate design and weaving skills of the artists, form a pattern with strong visual impact. The referent, on the other hand, is the cultural significance carried by the tiger pattern, including abstract concepts such as bravery, strength and good luck. The close connection between the reference and the energy is established through the cultural tradition and psychological identity of the Zhuang people.

In crafting traditional textiles, artists encode the tiger image into a concrete pattern form. This process involves observing, understanding, and abstractly expressing the tiger. When viewers encounter the tiger motif on the fabric, they decode it back into the tiger image and interpret the embedded cultural significance. This decoding process requires viewers to have relevant cultural background and knowledge to ensure accurate and complete interpretation. As a cultural symbol, the tiger motif is widely recognized and holds a strong sense of identity within the community. It appears in everyday life through decorative items and festival participation, serving as a cultural link between past and present, and between individuals and the collective. Additionally, the presence of the tiger motif promotes the preservation and evolution of the culture, ensuring that this unique ethnic art continues to thrive.

4.2.1.1.3.5 Crab pattern

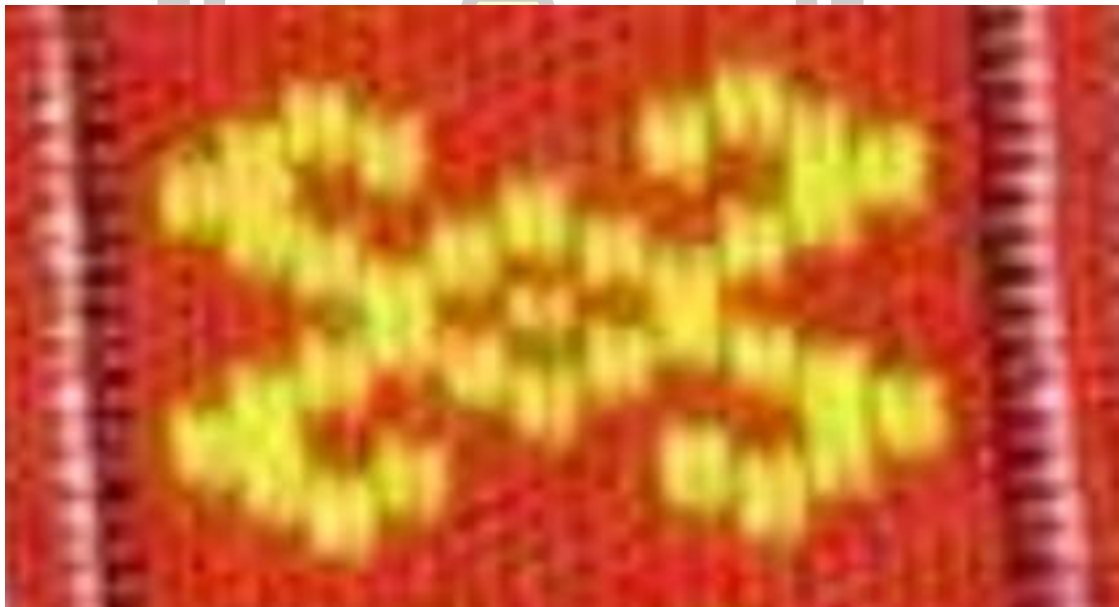


Figure 32 Crab pattern 1

Source: Luo Yingteng(2024)

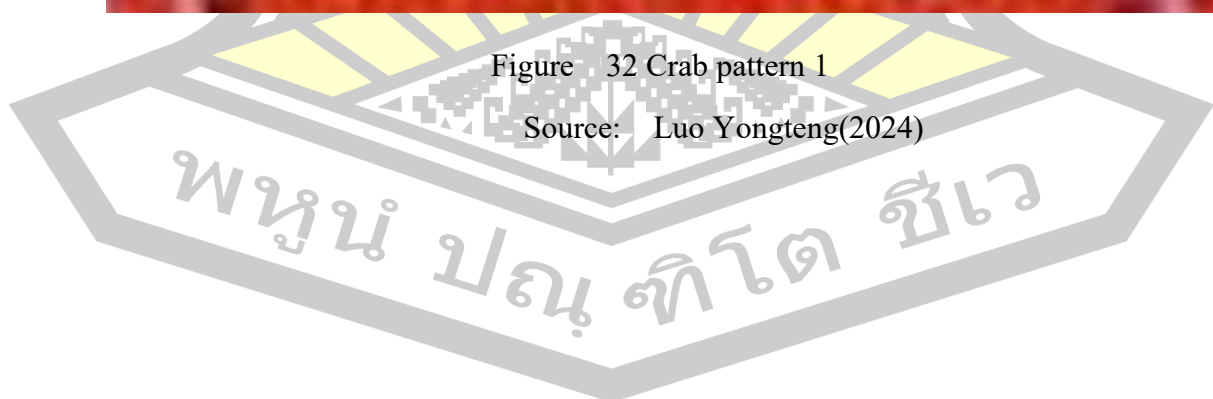




Figure 33 Crab pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

Among the diverse patterns found in traditional textiles, the crab motif, while less common than the phoenix and frog patterns, holds its own unique appeal and deep cultural significance. As a distinctive animal motif, the crab pattern showcases the meticulous observation and profound understanding of nature by the community. Through a semiotic perspective, this pattern conveys rich cultural meanings and aesthetic values, reflecting the intricate design and distinctive colors that embody the cultural and symbolic depth of the craft.

Crab pattern on Zhuang brocade are often presented in a way that combines realism and abstraction to show their unique charm. Specifically, the shells of the crabs are finely outlined with clear edges and smooth lines, showing the hard and textured shells of the crabs. The textures on the crab shells are either delicate or rough, varying according to the skill and creativity of the brocade artists, from a dense web to a few simple strokes, all of which endeavour to capture the natural beauty of the crab's shells. The crab's claws and feet are also vividly depicted, some of which are open in the shape of pincers, making them look powerful and mighty, while others are gently curved, adding a bit of softness and agility. Overall, the crab pattern on Zhuang brocade presents a realistic and decorative artistic effect.

From a semiotic point of view, the use of crab pattern in Zhuang brocade is not only a simple imitation of nature, but also a conveyance of deep cultural meaning. Cahill pointed out in *Theory of Man*: "Artistic symbols enable us to see the deepest and most varied movements of the human soul" (Cahill, 1944). As an artistic symbol in Zhuang brocade, the crab pattern carries the Zhuang people's reverence and

worship of nature, and at the same time, it also holds their desire and pursuit of a better life. Crabs are born with armour and are regarded as auspicious. The use of the crab motif in Zhuang brocade may imply that the wearer can have the toughness and protection of a crab to withstand all the difficulties and challenges in life.

In addition, the use of colours in the crab pattern is also highly artisanal. Zhuang brocade is made of colourful silk threads and cotton yarns, woven through the warp and weft process, with bright and rich colours. In the design of the crab pattern, artists cleverly use red, yellow, blue, green and other bright colours to depict the crab's armour, chelipeds and other parts of the crab in a vivid way, which not only shows the colourfulness of nature, but also adds to the infectious force of the brocade art. The use of these colours is not only in line with the passionate and exuberant character traits of the Zhuang people, but also reflects their love and pursuit of a better life.

It is worth mentioning that the appearance of crab pattern in Zhuang brocade is not isolated, and it often echoes with other patterns such as phoenix pattern, frog pattern and so on, and sets each other off, which together constitute a vivid and harmonious pattern picture. These patterns are intertwined and integrated with each other, which not only enriches the pattern types and expressions of Zhuang Brocade, but also deepens the cultural connotation and aesthetic value of Zhuang Brocade.

4.2.1.1.3.6 Butterfly pattern



Figure 34 Butterfly pattern 1

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)



Figure 35 Butterfly pattern 2

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

In the rich patterns of Zhuang brocade, the combination of butterflies and flowers is especially common, full of unique charm. The butterflies on Zhuang brocade adopt the shape of butterflies, and various small patterns are combined to form a butterfly-like shape, generally embellished with small flowers around the butterflies, which lightly surround a ring, and in the ring is a uniformly beautiful butterfly, just like the masterpiece of nature that is skilfully woven into the brocade. This pattern has a profound meaning, symbolising the harmony between family members, the smoothness of everything, and a happy and fulfilled state of life.

The butterfly motif in Zhuang brocade is celebrated for its dynamic form and vibrant color transitions. The artisans adeptly translate the natural beauty of butterflies into artistic symbols on the brocade, capturing intricate details such as the wings and antennae through the weaving technique. This pattern is not only visually striking but also imbued with profound cultural meanings.

From a semiotic perspective, the butterfly pattern in Zhuang brocade serves as a significant visual symbol rich in cultural and symbolic information. According to Cahill's Theory of Man, "Artistic symbols enable us to see the deepest and most varied movements of the human soul" (Cahill, 1944). The butterfly motif exemplifies such artistic symbols, reflecting both the Zhuang people's appreciation of natural beauty and their aspirations for an enhanced life.

In semiotics, a symbol comprises two elements: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the tangible form of the symbol, such as the butterfly design on the

brocade, while the signified refers to the concept or meaning it represents, such as good fortune, happiness, and freedom. The interplay between the signifier and signified endows the butterfly motif with profound cultural significance.

In traditional Zhuang culture, butterflies symbolize joy, freedom, happiness, and renewal. The butterfly pattern on Zhuang brocade thus not only illustrates the Zhuang people's admiration for natural beauty but also conveys their hopes for a prosperous future. Additionally, the motif represents prayers for vitality and the reproduction of offspring, with the butterfly's lifecycle symbolizing life's cycles and regeneration. This aspect of the butterfly pattern highlights its decorative role and deep cultural resonance.

As a prominent feature of Zhuang brocade art, the butterfly pattern attracts attention with its unique artistic allure and rich cultural depth. Through their weaving techniques and use of vibrant colors, Zhuang artisans transform the butterfly's natural beauty into symbolic expressions of their desires and cultural values. In semiotic terms, the butterfly pattern exemplifies a visual symbol laden with cultural significance, reflecting the Zhuang people's wisdom and creativity. but also provide us with a valuable way to deeply understand the traditional culture of the Zhuang people.

4.2.1.1.4 Chinese character pattern symbols



Figure 36 Chinese character "Fu" pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)



Figure 37 Chinese character pattern

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The auspicious Chinese character pattern in Zhuang brocade not only carry profound cultural connotations, but also embody the Zhuang people's aspiration and pursuit of a better life. Through clever conception and exquisite weaving techniques, these patterns integrate the Chinese characters with national beliefs and aesthetic concepts, forming a unique form of artistic expression.

The auspicious Chinese character patterns in Zhuang brocade mainly include swastikas, huizi, fu, shou, etc. These patterns are not only neat in shape and orderly in structure, but also contain rich auspicious meanings. These patterns are not only neat in shape and orderly in structure, but also contain rich auspicious meanings. Among them, the swastika is one of the most typical and common patterns, which is derived from Sanskrit, meaning "the collection of all auspicious virtues", and is regarded as the seal of Buddha's heart in Buddhism, symbolising light and good fortune. In Zhuang brocade, the swastika pattern forms a variety of continuous decorative symbols through different combinations and arrangements, such as "wealth and prosperity", "ten thousand years of flowing water", etc., which means that wealth and prosperity will last forever, Auspiciousness lasts forever.

"The swastika pattern in Zhuang brocade is very characteristic, which is in the form of cross symbols radiating in all directions, forming a rotationally symmetrical pattern. The swastikas in Zhuang brocade often appear in the form of yin or yang characters, with smooth lines and rigorous structure. Through the clever weaving of the loom, these swastikas can form a continuous decorative structure in two or four

directions, covering the entire surface of the brocade, displaying a solemn yet dynamic aesthetic.

From the perspective of semiotics, the auspicious Chinese character patterns in Zhuang brocade are a typical visual symbols, which are not only formally beautiful, but also carry deep cultural meanings. Cassirer pointed out in *Theory of Man*: "Artistic symbols show us the deepest and most varied movements of the human soul" (Cassirer, 1944). This is exactly the case with the auspicious Chinese character pattern in Zhuang brocade, which convey the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of good fortune, happiness and a better life through their specific forms, colours and arrangements.

The visual presentation of these pattern, such as the rotational symmetry and continuity of the swastika, as well as the combination of these pattern with other pattern, all reflect the close connection between the energetic and referential aspects of the symbols. The referent is the external form of the pattern, such as lines, colours, etc.; the reference is the cultural significance and auspicious meaning of the pattern. Through this unity of form and content, the auspicious Chinese character patterns in Zhuang brocade have become a kind of visual symbol with vitality, carrying the cultural memory and emotional support of the Zhuang people.

4.2.1.2 Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns: an interpretation of Zhuang culture under Geertz's theory of cultural symbols

Clifford Geertz's theory of cultural symbols is a cornerstone of interpretive anthropology, a field that seeks to gain a deeper understanding of culture by exploring the meanings and symbols that people create and use in their daily lives. According to Geertz, culture is a "system of inherited ideas expressed in symbolic form through which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitudes about life" (Geertz, 1973). In contrast to the structuralist or functionalist approach, which views culture as a set of rules or norms, Geertz argues that culture is made up of symbolic systems that provide a framework for individuals and communities to interpret their experiences.

At the heart of Geertz's theory lies the concept of "deep description", an approach to cultural analysis that goes beyond mere observation to reveal the deeper meanings embedded in cultural practices. Deep description involves not only understanding people's behaviours, but also revealing the deeper meanings of these behaviours and symbols in their cultural context. Geertz likens culture to a text, which anthropologists must "read" in order to understand the web of meanings that people weave in their lives.

Geertz's approach is deeply rooted in semiotics, the study of signs and symbols. In this context, a symbol is anything that conveys meaning, whether it is a word, a gesture, an object or a pattern. For Geertz, cultural symbols are crucial to

understanding how people perceive, interpret, and navigate the world. More than mere representations, these symbols are an active part of culture, helping to shape and transmit cultural values, beliefs and practices.

The patterns of ethnic brocade are rich and varied, with each design serving as a unique cultural symbol that embodies deep meanings, reflecting the worldview, beliefs, and values of the local people. According to Geertz's approach, these brocade textiles are not merely forms of decorative art, but also "texts" that convey the cultural narratives of the community. Symbols such as the herringbone, serrated lines, water-wave motifs, and loong patterns are more than aesthetic choices; they are cultural expressions.

Geertz's theory of cultural semiotic interpretation offers a robust framework for analyzing the symbolic meanings embedded in these brocade patterns. By viewing the motifs as cultural symbols that convey complex meanings, one gains a deeper understanding of the beliefs, values, and worldview of the people who craft them. His approach emphasizes the importance of context, symbolic networks, and cultural narratives, which are essential to comprehensively reading the intricate patterns of these traditional textiles. From this perspective, brocade is not just a textile but a cultural text that reveals the web of meaning shaping local traditions.

4.2.1.2.1 Nature worship

The Zhuang brocade decorative symbols are deeply influenced by the natural environment. Local residents believe that everything has a spirit, especially big trees that have lived for many years and can absorb the aura of heaven and earth and cultivate into tree gods to guard the people. The natural environment, as the cornerstone of the Zhuang people's life, provides a rich source of inspiration. Natural elements such as mountains, rivers, flora and fauna are all skilfully incorporated into the brocade patterns, becoming one of the unique symbols of Zhuang brocade.



Figure 38 Worship of tree gods by local people

Source: Guangxi library: <httpwww.gxlib.org.cn9980cubes-show-30787.shtml>(2024)

Xu Lujun's (2021) study argues that within Chinese Taoist beliefs, people worship and believe that natural phenomena such as the sun or stars, thunder, wind, rain, earthquakes, and other natural phenomena are governed by heavenly deities; and Chinese Taoists believe that the names of the governing deities, their junior officials, and assistants are written on white paper, and that Taoists believe that these symbols help them to communicate with heavenly deities, and that they can also ask for help from the earthly deities and even suppress demons and drive away evil. So it was believed that by drawing these things, which were similar to those in nature, onto paper and turning them into symbols, they would be able to communicate with the heavenly gods and gain supernatural powers.

Zhuang nature worship reflects the deep reverence and dependence of the Zhuang ancestors on the natural world, and this belief is not only a spiritual support but also part of their survival strategy. They believe that everything has a spirit, and natural elements such as the sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, plants and animals are endowed with mysterious power and spirituality (Liao, 1998; Qin, 1990). In their long-term interaction with the natural environment, the Zhuang people have developed a unique system of nature worship, which is not only reflected in their religious beliefs and folk customs, but also profoundly influences their artistic creations, especially the art of brocade weaving. The patterns of natural elements in Zhuang brocade are not only decorative, but also a way for them to dialogue with nature and seek blessings.

In Zhuang brocade, the sun motif, as a symbol of light and hope, carries rich cultural connotations. The light of the sun not only illuminates the earth, but also symbolises the energy of life and the hope of a good harvest. The sun decoration on brocade shows the Zhuang people's worship and gratitude to the sun through the radiant circular pattern. This worship is not only a reverence for natural phenomena, but also a prayer for vitality and prosperity. In the agricultural society, the sun is the key factor for the growth of crops. Therefore, the appearance of sun decoration in brocade is not only an artistic reproduction of natural phenomena, but also a yearning and pursuit of a better life (Liao, 1998). By analysing sun decorations, we can see how the Zhuang people combine nature worship with aesthetic demands in their artistic creation, creating works of art with both symbolic meaning and aesthetic value.

The floral patterns in Zhuang brocade not only have different forms and colours, but also contain deep connotations of fertility worship. The opening of flowers symbolises the reproduction and prosperity of life, and is similar to the shape of female reproductive organs, so it is regarded as a symbol of vitality and reproduction. In the art of brocade weaving, the use of floral patterns is not only for the purpose of decorative beauty, but also to convey prayers for the reproduction of life and the fullness of children and grandchildren (Fan & Wei, 2017). By analysing the layout and form of floral patterns in brocade, we can feel the Zhuang people's cherishing of life and their beautiful vision of the future. They incorporate these floral patterns, which symbolise life and reproduction, into the brocade not only to beautify their lives, but also to support their emotions and spiritual pursuits.

Thunder and lightning are regarded as sacred and mysterious natural forces in Zhuang culture, which can bring rain to nourish the earth and also represent the will and punishment of the gods. In brocade art, thunder and lightning pattern appear in the form of abstract cloud and thunder patterns, symbolising the might and mystery of thunder and lightning (Liao, 1999). By analysing the layout and form of thunder and lightning pattern in brocade, we can feel the Zhuang people's reverence and worship of thunder and lightning as a natural phenomenon. They incorporate these powerful natural elements into brocade not only for the sake of decorative beauty, but also to pray for the blessing of the gods and good weather. The use of thunder and lightning pattern reflects the Zhuang people's recognition and respect for the power of nature, as well as their wisdom to live in harmony with nature.

Water is the source of life and is vital to the Zhuang people. In the art of brocade weaving, water pattern appear in the form of waves or fish scale pattern, signifying the flow of water and the vitality of life. By analysing the layout and form of water pattern in brocade, we can feel the Zhuang people's treasure and gratitude for water resources. They incorporate these water-related natural elements into brocade not only to beautify the fabric, but also to convey their good wishes for good weather and good

harvests (Chen, 2016). In addition, the use of water-related mythological and legendary pattern such as loong and fish patterns in brocade further enriches the cultural connotation and artistic expression of brocade.

In the Zhuang culture, mountains are not only part of the natural environment, but also the habitat of the gods. In the art of brocade weaving, mountain decorations appear in the form of rolling peaks, signifying the magnificence and mystery of nature. By analysing the layout and form of the mountain decorations in brocade, we can feel the awe and worship of the Zhuang people for the mountains. They incorporate these majestic natural elements into the brocade not only for the sake of decorative beauty, but also for the purpose of sending their good wishes for harmonious coexistence with nature (Liao, 1997). In addition, the use of mythological and legendary pattern related to mountains, such as the cave of the immortals and the sacred mountains in brocade weaving adds to the mysterious colour and storytelling of brocade weaving, reflecting the rich imagination and creativity of the Zhuang people.

4.2.1.2.2 Reproductive worship

As a common cultural phenomenon in early human societies, fertility worship profoundly embodies the desire of human beings for the continuation of life and their respect for the ability to reproduce. The Zhuang, as one of the major ethnic minorities in southern China, not only has its culture of fertility worship a long history, but it also manifests itself in a variety of forms, which has had a profound impact on the development of Zhuang society.

In the witch songs sung by Zhuang witches in Guangxi, the centre of the cosmology and the spatial sphere is the "garden of paradise". This garden is regarded as the source of human life and symbolises the Garden of Life. Almost all witchcraft activities involve entering the "garden" and praying to the "flower woman". The "Garden" is managed by the "Flower Woman", who carefully cares for every flower in the garden and is responsible for daily watering, pest control, fertilising and weeding. On earth, when young newlyweds wish to have children, they will ask the witch to perform the ritual of seeking flowers. With the help of their ancestors' soldiers and horses, the witches would guide their souls into the "garden" and pray to the "Flower Woman" to grant them the soul of the flower, symbolising the arrival of a new life. If the child is born weak or sick, the family will ask the witch to enter the garden again to check the flower discs, roots and branches for lack of water or insects. The witch will then perform the appropriate rites of atonement, liberation and rejuvenation in order to restore the child's health. When people die, although their lives are over, their souls can return to the "garden" through specific rituals, waiting for the opportunity to be reincarnated. This concept embodies the idea of the cycle of life and regeneration, and is a unique understanding of life and death, the universe and space in Zhuang culture. (Huang, 2010)

Under the influence of the Zhuang people's belief that flowers are the source of all things and that people come from flowers, people worship flowers as the god of fertility. All the local people in Longzhou make offerings and worship their god of fertility, "Flower Lady". The Zhuang people will express their worship of the god of fertility, Flora, in their brocades by turning flowers into symbols, usually in the form of small flowers or small red flowers, which they believe are the appearance of the backyard of the god of fertility, Flora, through which they can express their sincerity and realise the goal of giving birth to children. Through these small flowers, they can express their sincerity to the god of fertility and fulfil their wish to have children.



Figure 39 The shrine of the Zhuang Fertility God

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

The veneration of animals such as frogs and snakes within the community serves as a key expression of their fertility worship. Frogs, known for their prolific reproduction, are seen as symbols of female fertility, while snakes are imbued with reproductive symbolism due to their resemblance to the male reproductive organ. These animal cults reflect the ancestors' deep reverence for fertility, closely intertwining it with religious beliefs through myths and legends. For instance, the goddess of creation, M'Liujia, is frequently associated with frogs, symbolizing the origin of life and reproduction (Liao, 1995). This association not only elevates the sanctity of fertility worship but also facilitates its widespread significance within the society.

The reverence for flowers, gourds, bamboo, and other plants similarly reflects the cultural emphasis on reproduction. Flowers, representing the reproductive organs of plants, were considered by early communities as symbols of life and fertility. In this context, M'Liujia, the Flower Goddess, is believed to bless fertility by bestowing

flowers (Lu, 2017). The gourd, known for its abundance of seeds and its resemblance to the female form, and bamboo, celebrated for its rapid growth and vitality, are also revered as potent fertility symbols. These plant cults not only enriched the expressions of fertility worship but also ingrained these beliefs deeply into daily life, manifesting through brocade patterns, wedding customs, and other cultural practices.

Living in a region with heavy rainfall, water holds a pivotal role in daily life and fertility beliefs. Water, symbolizing fertility, is embedded in various life stages, including conception, birth, growth, marriage, and even death (Liao, 2001). Rituals such as collecting "spring water" for New Year's celebrations, "fairy water" for weddings, and "inviting water" for funerals reflect the deep connection between water and fertility worship. These practices not only express the desire for life's continuation but also reinforce fertility beliefs through ritualized actions.

The worship of reproductive organs by the ancestors of the Zhuang people is a direct reflection of the importance they attached to fertility. Artifacts such as the "spirit stone" and the copper disc female cunt figure found in archaeology are the material carriers of the reproductive worship of the ancestors of the Zhuang people (Fan, 2019). These artefacts not only show the primitive worship of the Zhuang ancestors for their reproductive organs, but also reflect their simple wisdom and deep desire for the continuation of life in the face of nature and life.

Trees symbolise life and resilience in Zhuang culture, and the bamboo pattern, in particular, has been given a high symbolic meaning. Bamboo is a symbol of fertility worship because of its rapid growth and tenacity, and because its hollow joints resemble a woman's uterus (Liao, 1997). In brocade art, tree pattern often appear in the form of luxuriant leaves and upright trunks, signifying the vigour and resilience of life. Through the use of tree pattern in brocade, we can feel the Zhuang people's respect and pursuit of natural vitality. They incorporate these natural elements full of vitality into brocade, not only to beautify the fabric, but also to convey the praise and yearning for the power of life.

4.2.1.2.3 Totem worship

Totem worship, as an important religious belief of the ancestors of the Zhuang people, is vividly demonstrated in brocade decorations. Totem pattern such as phoenix, loong, tiger, bird and frog are not only beautiful and generous, but also contain rich cultural connotations and symbolism.

The application of the phoenix pattern in traditional brocade not only reflects the pursuit of beauty by the ancestors of the local people, but also contains deep cultural symbolism. As a mythical bird, the phoenix is often regarded as a symbol of good luck and happiness. In this type of brocade, the phoenix pattern is often designed with wings spread wide, featuring magnificent and intricate feathers and bright colors,

which not only demonstrates the high level of craftsmanship but also conveys the hopes and expectations of the people for a better life.

The phoenix design carries multiple symbolic meanings within the culture. On one hand, it represents the reverence and worship that the ancestors had for nature, reflecting their harmonious coexistence with the natural world. On the other hand, the phoenix motif symbolizes nobility and elegance, mirroring the people's aspirations for a refined and prosperous life. Furthermore, the phoenix pattern is often used to adorn important occasions such as weddings, signifying happiness and good fortune for the newlyweds (Chen, 2009). In the composition of brocade, the phoenix pattern is often combined with other elements to form patterns with rich meanings. For example, in the "loong and phoenix presenting auspiciousness" pattern, the phoenix pattern and the loong pattern echo each other, symbolising auspiciousness and happiness; while in the "phoenix through peony" pattern, the phoenix pattern is combined with the peony flower, symbolising wealth and auspiciousness and prosperity (Chen, 2009).

The loong pattern also has an important position in the Zhuang brocade, which is not only a symbol of honour and power, but also a token of the Zhuang people's reverence and worship of the power of nature. In brocade, the loong pattern is often designed as a sinuous form, with flashing scales and majestic forms, showing an irresistible power and majesty. Compared with the Han loong pattern, the loong pattern in Zhuang brocade is more simple and childish. They do not have the complexity and splendour of the Han loong pattern, but have more vividness and kindness. This kind of design not only reflects the unique charm of Zhuang culture, but also reflects the Zhuang people's love for nature and life (Cao, Guo, & Zhou, 2020).

In Zhuang brocade, loong pattern are often combined with other totemic pattern to form patterns with rich meanings. For example, in the "loong Playing with Pearls" pattern, the loong motif rotates and dances around a pearl, symbolising good fortune and wealth; while in the "Cloud loong Offering Rui" pattern, the loong motif is combined with clouds, signifying auspiciousness and good luck (Lu, 2017).

The tiger, as a symbol of courage and strength, is also vividly displayed in Zhuang brocade. In brocade, tiger pattern are often designed in a fierce and robust form, displaying an unrivalled dominance and strength. The tiger's fur texture is clearly visible, and its eyes are sharp and deep, as if it is ready to pounce on its prey at any time. The application of tiger pattern in Zhuang brocade not only reflects the fear of the Zhuang ancestors for nature and their determination to conquer nature, but also reflects their courageous and fearless spirit to challenge difficulties. In the composition of brocade, tiger pattern are often combined with other elements to form patterns with rich meanings. For example, in the "Tiger Leaping and loong Teng" motif, the tiger and loong pattern echo each other, together symbolising invincibility

and strength; while in the "Fierce Tiger Descending from the Mountain" motif, the tiger's unstoppable momentum is shown (Su, 2005).

Bird pattern in Zhuang brocade symbolise freedom, flight and beauty. In brocade, bird patterns are often designed in elegant and dynamic forms, either flying on the blue sky with their wings spread out or foraging for food in the forest grass, showing a light and airy beauty. The application of the bird pattern not only reflects the love and yearning of the Zhuang ancestors for the natural world, but also reflects their pursuit of freedom and the desire for a better life. In the composition of brocade, bird pattern are often combined with other flowers, fruits and other elements to form pattern that signify good luck and a good harvest. For example, in the "Birds and Flowers" pattern, bird pattern are combined with flowers to create a vibrant, springtime atmosphere; while in the "Birds Dancing Towards the Phoenix" pattern, the spectacular scene of many birds dancing around the phoenix is shown (Lu, 2017).

As one of the most distinctive totem pattern in Zhuang brocade, the frog motif symbolises life, reproduction and harvest. In brocade, the frog pattern is often designed as a crouching or jumping form, showing a vivid and lively aesthetic. The frog's bulging body and big eyes are full of spirit and vitality, making people feel the leap of life and prosperity. The application of the frog pattern not only reflects the in-depth observation and understanding of the Zhuang forefathers of the natural world, but also reflects their desire to respect life and pursue a good harvest. In the frog worship culture widely spread in the Zhuang area, frogs are regarded as the symbol of rain and good harvest. Therefore, the application of frog pattern in brocade weaving also signifies good weather and good harvest (Li, 2021).

In the composition of brocade, frog pattern are often combined with other elements to form patterns with rich meanings. For example, in the pattern of "Frogs Singing in the Fragrance of Rice", the combination of frog pattern and rice fields shows the close connection between frogs and agriculture; while in the pattern of "Frogs in the Lotus Pond", the vivid scene of frogs jumping happily in the lotus pond is shown (Meng, 2019).

4.2.1.3 Longzhou Zhuang brocade colours: the emotion and semantics of symbols

In addition to energy and reference, symbols also carry rich emotional and semantic information. In Zhuang brocade, colours, as an important part of symbols, convey specific emotions and semantics. Red, black and white are common colours in Zhuang brocade, which symbolize happiness and prosperity, stability and mystery, purity and elegance respectively. These colours not only enhance the visual effect of brocade, but also give it a deep cultural connotation.

In the affective and semantic analyses of symbols, one can also draw on Stuart Hall's theory of encoding/decoding (Hall, 1973). According to Hall, the process of interpreting symbols is a complex negotiation process, and viewers may interpret

symbols differently according to their own cultural backgrounds, personal experiences and other factors. Therefore, in the semiotic study of Zhuang brocade, it is necessary to pay attention to the process of interpreting and understanding the emotions and semantics of the brocade colours by different viewers, in order to reveal its deep cultural connotations and social values.

Symbols in Zhuang brocades are often rich in symbolism and profound meanings. For example, the loong and the phoenix, as auspicious pattern in traditional Chinese culture, also have a very high status in Zhuang brocade, symbolising power, dignity and good fortune. At the same time, different colour combinations also convey different emotions and meanings, such as the use of red, yellow, blue, green and other basic colours, which not only make the brocade colour bright and eye-catching, but also implies positive emotions such as warmth, jubilation and activity.

4.2.1.3.1 Colour sources and matching characteristics

In this vibrant land of Longzhou, the colours of traditional Zhuang brocade are as brilliant and colourful as the kaleidoscope of nature, and each splash of colour carries the wisdom and emotion of the Zhuang villagers. In the past, these vibrant colours were mostly modulated by the villagers' hands, who cleverly used natural dyes such as indigo, turmeric, cypress and maple given by nature to transform simple cotton, linen and silk threads into splendid colours such as blue, yellow, red and black. This self-sufficient dyeing method not only reflects the Zhuang people's reverence for nature and the concept of harmonious coexistence, but also gives each piece of Zhuang brocade a unique natural flavour.

For the spinning of traditional Zhuang brocade, the Zhuang people make full use of local plant resources and use natural plant dyes for colouring. Wu Yuanchan (2023) mentioned in "An Analysis of the Cultural Connotation of the Colour of Zhuang Brocade" that the black dyes mainly come from holly leaves, sebiferum leaves and other plants, the red dyes are taken from cypress, sumac and so on, and the yellow and green dyes can be obtained from gardenia, tulip, chrysanthemum, as well as bark, green grass and other plants, respectively. These natural dyes are not only colourful and durable, but also environmentally friendly and harmless, reflecting the wisdom of the Zhuang people to live in harmony with nature.



Figure 40 *Rubia cordifolia*

Source: Hong Kong Baptist University School of Chinese Medicine Medicinal Plant Image Database:

[httpssys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hkmedmpiddetail.php herb_id=D01304\(2024\)](httpssys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hkmedmpiddetail.php herb_id=D01304(2024))

Figure 40 This plant is *Rubia cordifolia*, which can dye spun threads red. According to Wu Weifeng's research, the colour dyed using *Rubia cordifolia* is not a bright, large red, but a darker, earthy red. The Zhuang ancestors had earlier mastered the technique of dyeing red with the herb *Cynthia cordifolia*. According to the Song Dynasty's "Lingwai Daiqian" written by Zhou Daifei, when the Zhuang people made rattan boats, they would dry the cress in the sun and then fill in the seams of the boards, so that even if they did not use tung oil grey and other fillers, the boats would not get into the water. This suggests that the juice of the cress contains a thick glue that can effectively fill the gaps between the boards of the boat. When used in dyeing cloth, it not only gives a red colour, but is also less likely to fade. What's more, cress also has the advantages of sterilisation, aroma and non-toxicity, so many developed countries in Europe and the United States have invested in researching plant dyes such as cress (Wu, 2014).



Figure 41 Turmeric, common turmeric

Source: Hong Kong Baptist University School of Chinese medicine medicinal plant image database:

[http://sys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/cmmedmpiddetail.php?herb_id=D01304\(2024\)](http://sys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/cmmedmpiddetail.php?herb_id=D01304(2024))

Figure 41 This plant is Turmeric, Common Turmeric, and can dye spun threads yellow. According to Li Suying, an inheritor of the local Zhuang brocade weaving technique in Longzhou, turmeric is a common dyeing raw material used by the Zhuang people. When turmeric is ripe, the leaves and branches are removed, and only the rhizome is taken, and the fresh rhizome or powdered turmeric is put into a pot with the right amount of water and heated to extract curcumin, which is filtered to remove the impurities. Then, the fabric was cleaned and pretreated to enhance its adsorption capacity. Next, the pre-treated fabric is completely immersed in the curcumin solution, maintained at a certain temperature and gently stirred so that the curcumin is evenly adhered to the fabric. According to the desired depth of dyeing, the immersion time can be extended appropriately. After the dyeing is completed, optional colour fixing treatment can be carried out to enhance the dyeing firmness. Finally, wash the fabric with water and hang it in a cool, ventilated place to dry naturally, repeated several times to get the yellow textile thread.



Figure 42 Indigo plant, true indigo

Source: Hong Kong Baptist University School of Chinese Medicine Medicinal Plant Image Database:

[httpssys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hkmedmpiddetail.php herb_id=D01304\(2024\)](httpssys01.lib.hkbu.edu.hkmedmpiddetail.php herb_id=D01304(2024))

Figure 42 This plant is the Indigo Plant, True Indigo, which dyes spun threads indigo blue. The dyeing of mullein relies heavily on the indigotin extracted from its leaves as the dye component. Firstly, the collected leaves of Mullein are treated by soaking so that the indigo pigment in them is dissolved in water. Subsequently, by adding an appropriate amount of quicklime and stirring, the chemical reaction between indigotin and lime is induced to produce water-insoluble indigo precipitate. After filtration and precipitation, the indigo clay, which is rich in indigo, is obtained. Before dyeing, the indigo clay is fermented and blended with warm boiled water, grass ash water and appropriate amount of rice wine to activate the dye and adjust its dyeing properties. Next, the pre-treated fabric is completely immersed in the blended dye solution and left to stand for a period of time to allow the indigo to fully adhere. Afterwards, the fabric is removed and exposed to air for oxidation, at which point the dye solution will gradually oxidise from yellowish green to blue, completing the initial dyeing. The dyeing and oxidation process can be repeated several times in order to obtain a deeper colour. Finally, the dyed fabric is washed and dried to obtain a blue fabric dyed from wood blue.



Figure 43 *Acer pseudoplatanus*

Source : Pixabay : <http://pixabay.com/zh/> (2024)

The plant in Figure 43 is *Acer pseudoplatanus* or called maple, and the leaves and fine branches of the maple tree are an important raw material for black dye. Maple leaves go through a natural process of changing colour from green to red or yellow in autumn due to changes in natural conditions such as falling temperatures and reduced sunlight. Therefore, villagers will choose to collect leaves and branches in spring and summer when the maple leaves are still green. Fresh maple leaves are selected as raw materials, which are crushed or ground, and soaked by adding appropriate amount of water. The pigment components in the maple leaves are extracted through filtering and precipitation steps. Alternatively, the maple leaves and fine twigs can be pounded together and put into a pot with an appropriate amount of water to be heated and boiled, and kept for a certain boiling time, so as to make the pigment composition in the maple leaves dissolve in the water and react with other substances in the water to produce a black colour, and then the material to be dyed is put into the boiled maple leaf water to be dyed. Alternatively, the maple leaves or the extracted maple pigment solution are put into a container together with the material to be dyed for soaking, and by controlling the conditions such as the soaking time and temperature, the dye penetrates into the interior of the material to achieve dyeing.

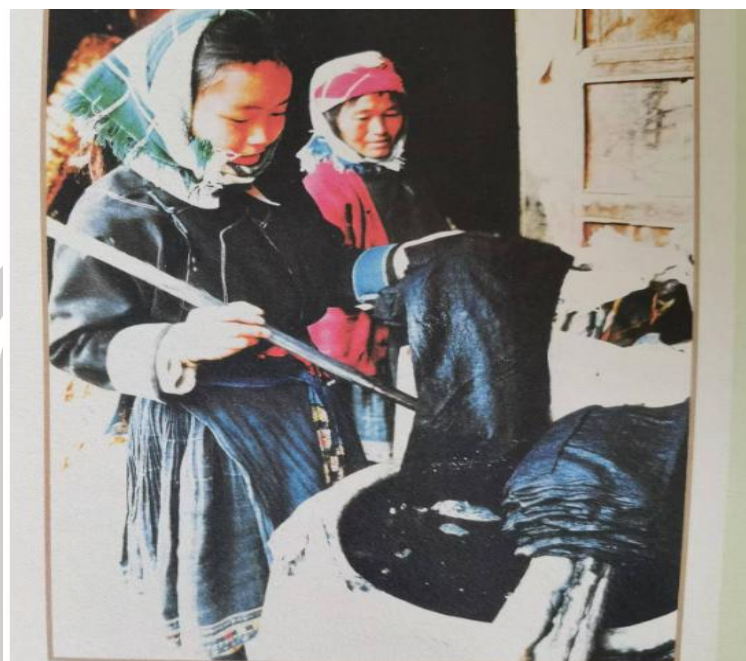


Figure 44 Traditional indigo dyeing

Source: Wu Weifeng(2014)

As the wheel of time rolls forward, innovations in modern textile technology have quietly changed this tradition. Nowadays, in the brocade weaving workshops in Longzhou, villagers more often choose to buy colourful cotton, linen and silk threads directly from the market, and these pre-dyed threads provide them with a more diversified choice of colours, making the colourful world of Zhuang brocade even more colourful. Figure 44 shows the researcher spinning threads photographed in one of the largest Zhuang brocade production workshops in the region, which are colourful and come in all colours. Upon enquiry, the person in charge of the workshop, an inheritor of the Zhuang brocade weaving technique in Longzhou, told the researcher that nowadays, all threads are purchased from the market, and all colours are available for whatever they are desired.

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Figure 45 Spun threads dyed in various colours by modern chemical technology

Source: Luo Yonteng(2024)

The colors of traditional brocades from Longzhou are rich and varied, deeply connected to the living environment and cultural traditions of the local people. According to Zhang Qun and Wang Yunlong (2018) in the article "Analysis of the beauty of the colors of Guangxi brocades," the formation of these colors is heavily influenced by the subtropical geographical environment of the region. Longzhou, located in the southwestern part of Guangxi, is bathed in sunlight, green year-round, and filled with flowers, providing abundant color inspiration for its inhabitants. Additionally, the colors of these brocades reflect the unique aesthetic concepts and preferences of the people. In feudal times, the use of colors was often restricted by social hierarchy, but as a folk fabric produced in a family-based style, brocade weaving was less subject to these constraints, allowing weavers to freely select and arrange colors as they wished.

As time has progressed, the colors of modern brocades have been continuously innovated and enriched while maintaining traditional hues. According to Liang Wei (2023) in the article "Application research on the integration of non-heritage culture into the color teaching curriculum of secondary clothing - Take the design of brocade pattern elements as an example," modern brocades have become more diverse in their color usage. Weavers have not only preserved traditional red, yellow, blue, and green tones but also introduced new color elements, making the textiles more vibrant and complex. This evolution in color is not only driven by advances in weaving technology but also reflects shifts in modern aesthetic preferences.

In terms of color matching, Fan Daozhi's research indicates that traditional brocades from Longzhou primarily use pure hues like black, blue, and white.

Typically, white cotton threads serve as the warp and black cotton threads as the weft. When it comes to multi-color combinations, these brocades effectively utilize bold colors, with blue, black, red, and green as the foundation, complemented by additional hues to create striking contrasts that emphasize the theme and rugged style. Villagers have developed techniques for pairing and complementing colors, such as using blue or black as the base, accented with white, yellow, or other colors, or black with red and green highlights, enhancing the central design.

With the availability of more raw materials in modern times, the color combinations in today's brocades are more varied, making the products more vibrant and visually rich (Fan, 2014).

4.2.1.3.2 Emotion and semantics of symbols

The use of Zhuang brocade colours is not only reflected in the appearance of the fabric, but also contains deep cultural connotations and symbolism. In traditional Zhuang society, the colours of Zhuang brocade are often used to express people's aspirations and pursuit of a better life. For example, red symbolises auspiciousness, festivity and vitality; yellow represents harvest and abundance; and blue signifies tranquillity and depth (Wu, 2023). The clever combination of these colours on Zhuang brocade not only makes the fabric itself more beautiful and attractive, but also conveys a rich cultural message.

Red colour symbolises vitality and prosperity in Longzhou Zhuang brocade and is often used to express an auspicious and festive atmosphere. Red is not only one of the main colours in brocade, but also often appears in various auspicious patterns, such as the phoenix and the sun. The red phoenix spreading its wings and flying in brocade symbolises happiness and prosperity (Wu, 2023). This motif is not only striking because of its brilliant colours, but is also popular because of its auspicious meanings. The red sun is often seen in brocade, symbolising light and warmth (Ye, 2023). It not only adds vitality to the brocade, but also signifies the Zhuang people's reverence for life force and reproduction.

Yellow is represented in Longzhou Zhuang brocade as a bright, lively hue that symbolises light, hope and a good harvest. It is often used to depict natural elements such as the sun and flowers, conveying warmth and vibrant imagery. Yellow flowers in brocade are as brilliant and eye-catching as real flowers in the sun, showing the beauty and harmony of nature (Chen, 2023). The pattern of yellow flowers not only adds to the visual effect of the brocade, but also signifies the Zhuang people's love and pursuit of a better life. Yellow is often used to depict the rays of the sun, symbolising hope and warmth shining on the earth (Zhang & Wang, 2018). These radiant lines are especially vivid and powerful in the brocade.

The colour blue represents tranquillity, depth and solemnity in Longzhou Zhuang brocade. It is often used to depict natural scenes such as clouds and rivers, creating a

serene and far-reaching mood. Blue clouds float leisurely in the brocade, as if bringing people into a peaceful world of the sky (Zhong, 2018). The blue clouds not only enrich the pattern elements of the brocade, but also signify the Zhuang people's reverence for nature and exploration of the unknown. The blue river meanders in the brocade, mirroring the green riverbank (Liang, 2023). This colour combination not only shows the beautiful scenery of nature, but also reflects the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of a harmonious ecological environment.

Green symbolises vitality and growth in Longzhou Zhuang brocade, representing the vibrancy of all natural things. It is often used to depict natural landscapes such as leaves and grass, conveying the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. Green leaves come to life in the brocade, as if they can breathe fresh air (Zhang & Wang, 2018). These leaves not only add vitality and vigour to the brocade, but also imply the Zhuang people's love for the natural environment and awareness of protection. The green grass and the blue sky, yellow flowers and other colours reflect each other, forming a vivid picture of nature (Liang, 2023). These patterns show the diversity of the natural world and reflect the Zhuang people's pursuit of vitality and sustainable development.

Black and white often appear as the base or auxiliary colours in Longzhou Zhuang brocades, and although they are not as vivid as the colours of red, yellow, blue and green, they play a crucial role in the overall effect of the brocades. In brocade, the clever combination of black and white creates an artistic effect of simplicity and elegance (Chen, 2023). This colour combination is in line with the introverted and calm character of the Zhuang people, giving the brocade a unique flavor and temperament. In the colour brocade, black and white often appear as the base or secondary colours, contrasting with other bright colours (Ye, 2023). This colour combination enriches the layering and visual effect of brocade and enhances the visual impact of the overall pattern.

Each color symbol in Longzhou brocade carries a wealth of emotion and meaning. Red represents vitality and prosperity; yellow signifies light and hope; blue embodies tranquility and depth; green symbolizes vitality and harmony; while black and white offer a steady and elegant presence. These color symbols not only enhance the visual appeal of the brocade but also reflect the worldview, values, and aesthetic orientation of the local people.

In summary, this section provides a comprehensive analysis of the symbolic meanings of the decorations and colors in Longzhou brocade and the cultural connotations behind them. Using semiotic and cultural semiotic theories, the study demonstrates that symbols such as geometric patterns, plant motifs, mythological and animal figures, and Chinese characters in brocade serve not only decorative purposes but also carry rich symbolic meanings. These symbols reflect the community's reverence for nature, life, and culture. Additionally, the use of colors like red, yellow,

and blue conveys auspiciousness, prosperity, and harmony, respectively. Interpreting these patterns through Geertz's theory of cultural symbols highlights the unique role of brocade motifs in transmitting cultural beliefs and values. The continued practice and evolution of brocade weaving are crucial for the promotion of cultural heritage and the strengthening of national identity.

4.2.2 Social Functions of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

Structural functionalism, often referred to simply as functionalism, also known as the functional school or functionalism, is a framework for structural theory that regards the society as a complex system consisting of many components complex system. These components work together to facilitate the stable and steady functioning of society. Structural Functionalism uses a macro orientated view of society, focusing on the social structures that shape social structure. Structural Functionalism uses a macro-oriented approach to view society, focusing on the social structures that shape society and seeing it as a whole, believing that society evolves as if it has multiple organs (Maconis & Gerber, 2011). In addition to social structure, structural functionalism also understands society through the lens of social function. Functionalism views society as a functional complex of its parts, including the society customs traditions traditions, and routines mechanisms. The

By integrating structural functionalism theory, we can gain a deeper insight into the multifunctional role of brocade culture. This cultural practice not only contributes significantly to the social structure but also encompasses a broad spectrum of social customs, traditions, and routine mechanisms. These interconnected elements work together to ensure the smooth operation and ongoing development of brocade culture within the society.

Through the preservation and application of brocade traditions, members of the community adhere to specific behavioral norms and values, thereby strengthening social cohesion and collective identity. Additionally, brocade culture serves crucial functions across various socio-economic, political, and religious domains, aiding in the overall prosperity and stability of the community. The main purpose of this section is to explore the multiple social functions of Zhuang brocade culture,, for this reason, this study adopts a qualitative research method, through the review of relevant literature, on-site observation, survey visits, interviews, non-scaled questionnaires and other ways to obtain the data materials, the data is collected through the written documents and field work, and after sorting out and analysing the data, descriptive analysis is used for the presentation of the method.

Ultimately, it is analysed in depth from three dimensions: educational inheritance, cultural identity, and the function of gifts in life rituals. In terms of educational inheritance, Zhuang brocade, as an important part of family education, passes down skills and culture from generation to generation through oral and heart-to-heart

teaching, which not only transmits the weaving skills, but also carries the Zhuang people's wisdom of life, outlook on life, values, and the concepts of respect for nature and harmonious coexistence. In terms of cultural identity, Zhuang brocade, as an important carrier of Zhuang culture, strengthens the ethnic consciousness and cultural identity of Zhuang people through its rich decorations and patterns, and becomes a symbol of national identity confirmation and pride. In life rituals, Zhuang brocade, as a precious gift, plays an indispensable role in important ceremonies such as births, full-moon ceremonies, weddings and funerals, etc. Through the gift of brocade, Zhuang people deepen their emotional ties with each other, and work together to maintain the unity and harmony of the community.

4.2.2.1 Educational functions

In his research, Meng Yuanyao (2010) argues that the wisdom of a nation encompasses its deep understanding of nature and society, including life experiences passed down from generation to generation, unique cultural heritage, subtle inventions, and strategies and methods of unity and cooperation to cope with challenges that have been developed over the course of history. This wisdom not only reflects the cognitive ability and creativity of the nation, but also serves as the foundation of its culture and the driving force of its sustainable development.

The wisdom of a people is mainly passed on through education, and it is an important mission of schools to pass on the wisdom of the previous generation to the next so that their civilisation can progress, however, before 1955, the Zhuang had no mature writing system, no schools, and no corresponding public education institutions, so the wisdom of the nation was often taught to children hand in hand at home, at mealtimes, and in the midst of their labour (Meng, 2016).

4.2.2.1.1 Education for skills transmission

The process of weaving Zhuang brocade is taught to children step by step by adults, and weaving and embroidery is a real family education for Zhuang families. According to Li Xiuli (2009), due to the simplicity of the loom and the ease of operation, when a girl reaches the age of 11-12, she starts to learn to weave Zhuang brocade under the guidance of her mother; by the time she reaches the age of 16-17 when catching up with the song market, she is already able to give away the Zhuang brocade head scarf or hanging bag that she has weaved to her acquaintances.



Figure 46 Local weavers in Longzhou teaching children to weave Zhuang brocade

Source: China News Network(2024)

Figure 46 shows a Zhuang old man teaching children to weave Zhuang brocade, which is a process of wisdom transmission, in which the old man passes the wisdom accumulated in her brain throughout her life to the children through the activity of weaving Zhuang brocade. In the cultural tradition of the Zhuang people, Zhuang brocade not only represents the pursuit of beauty, but also deeply embodies the wisdom transfer function of the Zhuang people.

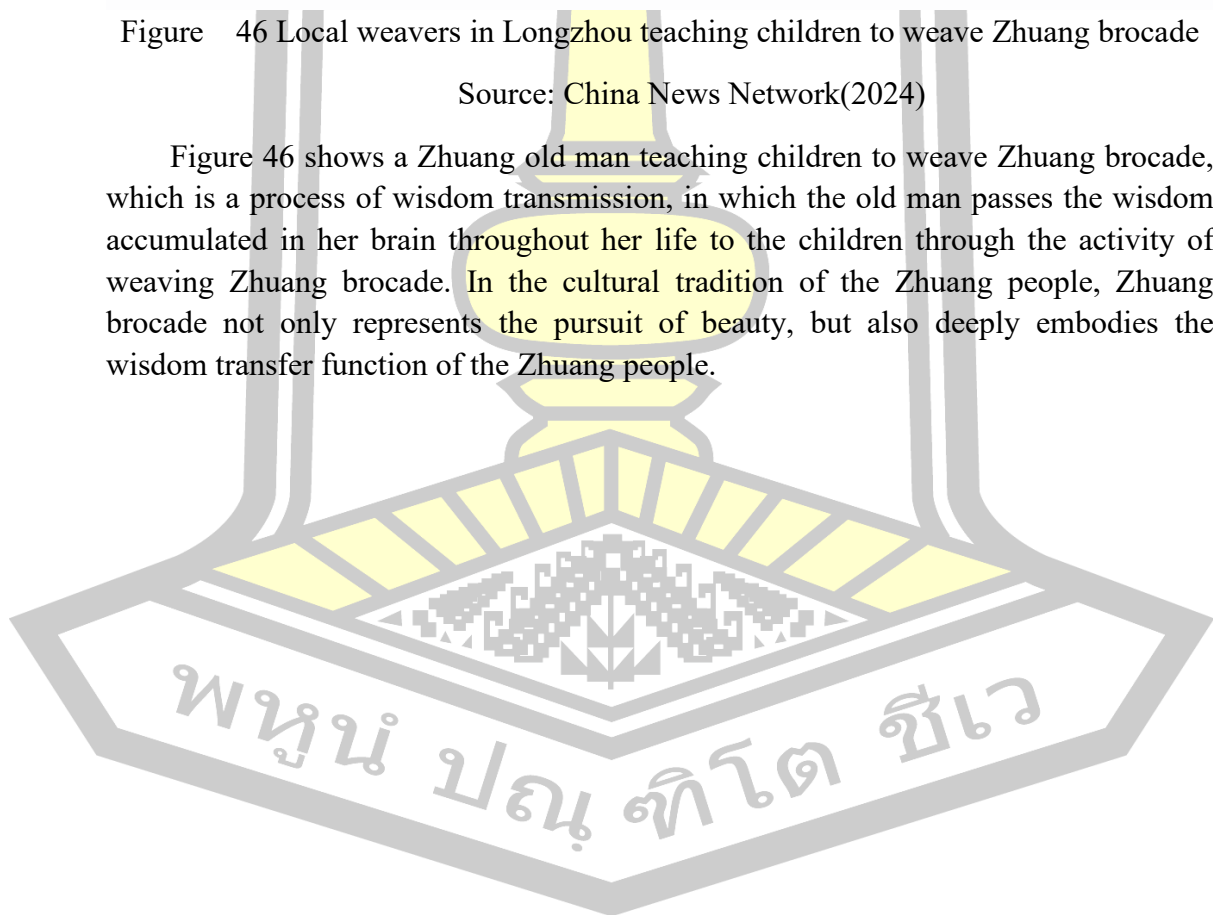




Figure 47 Interview between the researcher and Li Suying, with Li Suying on the left and the researcher on the right

Source: Luo Yingteng(2024)

In a conversation with the researcher, Ms Li Suying recalled that when she was a child, her mother taught her the art of weaving Zhuang brocade by hand. Her grandmother was the best brocade weaver in the family, and her mother's skills were also taught by her grandmother. When she was about 4 years old, she started to go to the mountains with her mother and grandmother to pick dyes such as maple leaves and bluegrass, and at that time, the children of other families in the village also went to look for raw materials led by their mothers and grandmothers, and in the mountains, the adults would teach the children how to choose mature plants and how to pick them so that they wouldn't lose the properties of the raw materials, and so on, and the raw materials of the plants were picked. After picking the raw materials, we have to go home and process them according to the methods and procedures passed down by our ancestors, and our grandmothers and mothers would teach us hand in hand, I made many mistakes, but my mother always corrected me in time and educated me patiently, after the raw materials are processed, we have to go to spinning, and process the cotton or silk into a piece of yarn, and then soak the yarn in the vegetable dyes, and then the yarn is completed after several days, and the spinning is completed, and various colours will be obtained. various colours. After getting the yarn, it is time to start weaving Zhuang brocade. The process of weaving Zhuang brocade is even more complicated, which involves drawing the warp, warping, threading the reed, combing and rolling the warp, loading the machine, dividing the small heddle, dividing the big heddle, threading the reed, playing the yam and loading the shuttle, weaving the edge of the cloth, picking out the flowers, knotting the book, sending the warp to the weft, picking out the flowers (to match the colours), walking the shuttle, and hitting the

weft. It took me a long time to learn from my grandmother and mother. There were years when we basically repeated the whole process of brocade weaving every day, and my grandmother and mother kept teaching me. In modern times, children don't learn to weave Zhuang brocade, they are in school all day long and don't have time to learn, and the traditional crafts passed down from our old ancestors may be lost with the faster pace of modern life. (Transcript of researcher's interview with Li Suying, 2024)

The Zhuang brocade weaving technique is a valuable asset that has been passed down from generation to generation, and it is inherited within the family or community through oral transmission and hand-to-hand teaching. This inheritance is not only on a technical level, but also includes the transmission of profound knowledge of material selection, pattern design, colour matching and so on. By learning and practising brocade weaving techniques, the younger generation will not only be able to master a practical handcraft skill, but will also be able to deeply understand the cultural significance and historical value behind it, thus enhancing their sense of identity and pride in their national culture.

4.2.2.1.2 Education in life and values

The process of making Zhuang brocade is not only a material creation, but also a process of spiritual cultivation. It teaches patience, care and perseverance, as each piece of brocade requires a long period of careful weaving, and there is no room for sloppiness. In addition, brocade patterns are often rich in symbolism, such as auspiciousness, harmony, hard work, etc. The process of choosing and weaving these patterns is also an important way of conveying moral concepts and philosophies of life, which helps people learn how to behave in practice and how to live in harmony with nature and society.

Nature worship and a life-respecting outlook are deeply embedded in the intricate designs of traditional textiles. Patterns depicting natural elements, such as water, clouds, flowers, birds, and animals, are not only a reflection of nature's beauty but also signify a deep respect and love for life. These designs are preserved through the art of weaving, educating future generations to value and cherish nature. As Liao Mingjun (2023) notes in *Traditional Textiles: Social Life and Symbolism*, these natural motifs often carry profound meanings, representing the harmonious relationship between the community and their environment.

A positive outlook on life is evident in the vibrant and contrasting colours used in these textiles. Colors such as red, yellow, blue, and green not only showcase the pursuit of aesthetic beauty but also reflect a vibrant and optimistic attitude towards life. This use of color conveys an encouraging and hopeful perspective, motivating individuals to face life's challenges with enthusiasm and courage. Meng Gengyang (2019) describes in *Totem Worship and Ecological Significance* how these cultural

textiles emphasize a harmonious coexistence with nature, a concept vividly illustrated through their colors and patterns.

Values, including hard work and resilience, are central to the production of these textiles. The intricate and time-consuming process involved in creating each piece exemplifies the weaver's dedication and craftsmanship. The complex geometric patterns and detailed depictions of flora and fauna highlight the artisan's commitment to excellence. For instance, patterns like the diamond and cloud-thunder motifs not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also reflect the weavers' perseverance and pursuit of skill. These values encourage individuals to embrace diligence and resilience in their own lives, striving for excellence despite challenges.

Additionally, the values of natural harmony and ecological protection are prominently featured in the designs. Elements such as rippling water, cloud patterns, and depictions of flora and fauna represent not just the beauty of nature but also the principle of living in harmony with the environment. For example, cloud and thunder patterns symbolize natural phenomena, reflecting a reverence for and alignment with nature's rhythms. The diverse patterns of flowers, birds, fish, and insects highlight the importance of ecological balance. These motifs reinforce the interconnectedness of humanity and nature, urging people to respect and protect the environment and achieve a balanced coexistence. Values of solidarity and mutual assistance. In Zhuang society, the transmission of brocade weaving skills is often achieved through mutual cooperation within the family or community. The younger generation learns the brocade weaving skill under the guidance of the elders, and at the same time passes on their experience and insights to the next generation. This way of inheritance not only promotes the preservation and development of the skills, but also strengthens the spirit of unity and mutual assistance within the family and community. In the decorations of Zhuang brocade, some combination patterns, such as double loongs playing with pearls and phoenixes wearing peonies, often signify good fortune and harmony, and these patterns also indirectly reflect the Zhuang people's emphasis on the values of unity and mutual assistance. By learning and making brocade together, the Zhuang people teach their descendants to cherish their traditions, to be united, to help each other, and to work together to cope with the challenges and difficulties of life.

The patterns found in traditional textiles, encompassing elements such as water, clouds, flowers, grasses, insects, fish, birds, and beasts, as well as complex mythical symbols, reflect the deep understanding and respect the community holds for the natural world. These designs go beyond mere decoration, embodying profound wisdom. For instance, the water ripple pattern signifies living in harmony with nature and maintaining ease; the depiction of double phoenixes at sunrise symbolizes marital harmony and familial unity; and the motif of two dragons playing with pearls represents unity, cooperation, and harmonious coexistence. These motifs encapsulate

the accumulated wisdom of the community's ancestors, shaped through their long-standing interactions with nature and their environment.

Interview transcripts:

Researcher: Hello, can you talk in detail about the function of Zhuang textiles in the transmission of Zhuang wisdom?

Interviewee: Hello. These textiles are indeed an important tool for the transmission of our cultural wisdom. Through these fabrics, we not only transmit skills but also culture, values, and life wisdom.

Researcher: Can you explain specifically how this wisdom transfer is achieved?

Interviewee: First of all, the pattern design of these textiles is rich in profound wisdom. For example, the pattern of water ripples teaches us to follow nature and be at ease with the situation, embodying the wisdom of living in harmony with nature. Another example is the pattern of double phoenixes and sunrise and double dragons playing with pearls, which represent the concept of family harmony and unity, reflecting the wisdom of interpersonal communication. These motifs subtly influence our way of thinking and code of conduct.

Researcher: In addition to the design of the pattern, is there a transmission of wisdom embedded in the process of making these textiles?

Interviewee: Yes, the process of creating these fabrics is itself a transmission of wisdom. During the weaving process, mothers teach their daughters various skills and life experiences, such as choosing the right threads and weaving intricate patterns. More importantly, mothers instill cultural traditions and values in their daughters through this process, allowing them to gradually appreciate the essence and wisdom of our culture as they grow up.

Researcher: So, these textiles not only have aesthetic value in our society but also carry the function of wisdom transmission?

Interviewee: That's right. These textiles are the crystallization of our people's wisdom, carrying our cultural traditions, life experiences, and interpersonal wisdom. Through these fabrics, we are able to pass on this valuable knowledge from generation to generation, maintaining the uniqueness and continuity of our ethnic culture. This is one of the reasons why these textiles hold such an important place in our society. (This is a transcript of an interview between the researcher and a local resident, Ms. Li Suying, on 15 April 2024)

From the above interview records, it is easy to see that these textiles are not only the embodiment of our pursuit of beauty but also reflect the deeper cultural and educational functions of our people. Through these fabrics, we pass on and display our attitude towards life, our values, and our reverence and love for nature. The

patterns, ranging from simple natural elements such as water, clouds, flowers, and grasses to complex motifs like double dragons playing with beads and phoenixes adorned with peonies, symbolize the harmonious coexistence with nature and reflect our longing and desire for a better life. These patterns are not only beautiful but also rich in deep cultural connotations. They tell the stories of our interaction with nature and others, conveying the cultural essence of our people. Therefore, these textiles play a crucial role in cultural education and serve as an important carrier of our cultural heritage.

4.2.2.2 Cultural identity and reinforcement functions

In Key Concepts in Cultural Theory, Edgar (2016) says that the question of identity is crucial to cultural studies insofar as it has to examine the various contexts in which individuals and groups construct, address and defend their identities or self-understandings. This statement provides an insight into the importance of identity issues in cultural studies. Edgar's theory emphasises the centrality of identity issues in cultural studies. It states that cultural studies is concerned with how individuals and groups construct, maintain and defend their self-identities in different contexts. The dynamics and diversity of identity are crucial to understanding social and cultural phenomena, reflecting the depth and breadth of cultural studies.

In other words, the issue of cultural identity and identity is important because, since the 20th century, there is a very close relationship between the world's political, economic, ideological, war, the disintegration of colonies, feminism and the rise of subcultures and other contextual changes. And nowadays, China is in the era of rapid cultural development, if it fails to strengthen its cultural identity and reinforce its cultural identity, it will inevitably usher in a crisis. As Fu Meihong mentioned in her thesis, the growing crisis of cultural identity and identification is not conducive to social development. The development history, cultural background and class differences of different nationalities lead to the complication of cultural identity and identification in literary creation. Taking writers of ethnic minority literature as an example, they need to face the challenge of identity between Western culture, Han culture and their own culture. The cultural crisis mainly stems from the challenges of modernisation, the influence of Han culture and literature on national discourse, and the cultural assimilation brought about by globalisation. The cultural collision triggered by social modernisation is also a major cause of the crisis, which leads to a crisis of national cultural identity, which promotes the innovation and development of national culture as well as poses a challenge to traditional culture (Fu, 2022).

Nowadays, the identity of Zhuang culture and national cultural identity are challenged by strong foreign cultures and face identity crises, which are mentioned in Nong Wenjun's (2017) study that, in the context of globalisation and capitalism, the Jingxi Zhuang brocade culture has been transformed from the embodiment of ethnic aesthetics, beliefs, spirituality and history into a symbolic symbol of Zhuang culture. In the process of its symbolisation, it faced problems such as imbalance caused by the

government's over-rapid advancement, the fading out of traditional costumes from the market, foreign cultural intervention, the fault line of the inheritors and the loss of the people's cultural dominance, and was caught in a predicament of inheritance. This triggered the discussion on the necessity of reconstructing the culture of Jingxi Zhuang brocade and the exploration of its reconstruction method.

Therefore, it is essential for the Zhuang people to construct, solve, and defend their identity or self-understanding amid various contextual crises. The three treasures of the Zhuang people—the embroidered ball, traditional woven fabrics, and the bronze drum—are significant symbols of their culture. The woven fabrics, as an important carrier of their traditional heritage, demonstrate profound ancestor worship and cultural identity through their rich ornamentation and patterns. These motifs are not only a record and inheritance of the history and culture of their ancestors but also serve to confirm and strengthen the identity and sense of belonging of the ethnic groups.

The formation of this ethnic group is closely linked to its unique culture, a process that has resulted in a strong sense of ethnic consciousness and identity. The ancestors of this group distinguished themselves from others through distinctive symbols such as hair-breaking, tattooing, and chiselling of the teeth, practices that are detailed in historical documents like the Historical Records. Over their long historical development, they have created a rich cultural heritage based on their natural environment and production methods, including their language, rice culture, copper drums, woven textiles, Huashan rock paintings, myths and legends, totem worship, and mountain songs. These elements not only demonstrate the individuality and regional characteristics of their culture but also serve as important markers of their distinction from other ethnic groups.

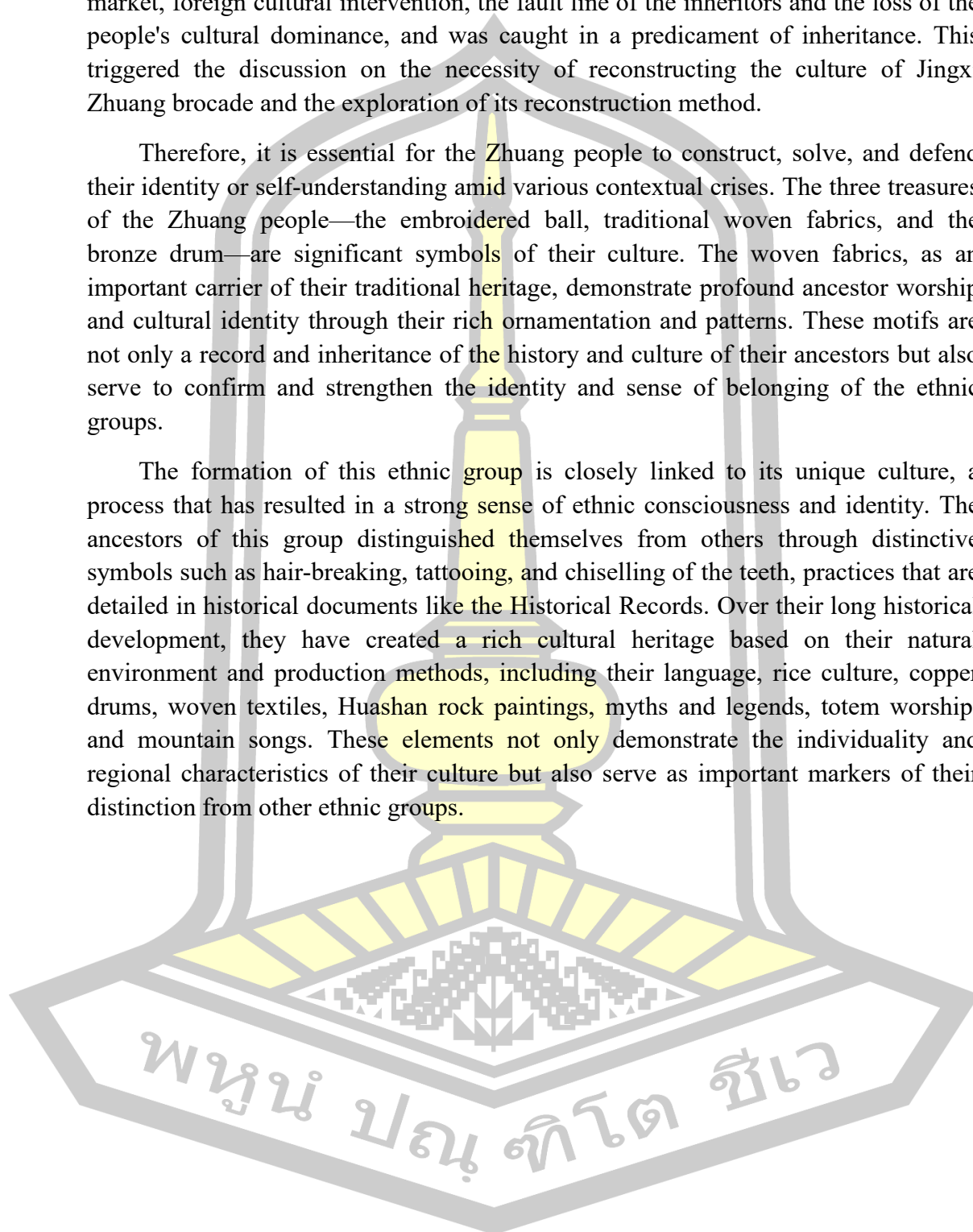




Figure 48 Ritual scene in Zhuang brocade

Source: Luo Yingteng(2024)

Figure 48, a floral pattern on top of Zhuang brocade, reproduces a scene of ancestor sacrifice. The feathered man wearing a hat made of beautifully woven long feathers and a feathered apron, driving cattle and sheep as sacrificial offerings, is dancing and looking up at the sky, while the red figures in the sky represent the ancestors of the Zhuang people, who are with heaven and earth and are accepting offerings from their descendants, while also seeking benefits for their descendants.

Zhuang brocade, as an important carrier of the traditional culture of the Zhuang people, is not only known for its exquisite craftsmanship and unique pattern designs, but also contains deep cultural connotations and historical inheritance. In the rich ornamentation of Zhuang brocade, ancestor worship and ancestor identity, as one of the core elements, are embodied and disseminated through the form of patterns and symbols. In this section, we will start from the specific patterns in Zhuang brocade decorations and explore how they reflect and strengthen the ancestral cultural identity of the Zhuang people.

Ancestor worship among the Zhuang has a long history and is an important part of their religious beliefs. The Zhuang people believe that the souls of their ancestors are indestructible and have extraordinary divine powers that can bless future generations with peace and prosperity (Li, 2007). This belief is reflected in daily life, especially in rituals and festivals. The Zhuang people express their reverence and remembrance of their ancestors through various rituals in order to seek their protection and blessings.

As a kind of handicraft, Zhuang brocade is not only a practical item for daily life, but also an important medium for cultural transmission. The patterns and decorations on brocade often contain rich cultural significance and historical information. In the process of brocade making, the weavers convey their admiration and nostalgia for their ancestors through the selection and design of patterns, making brocade weaving one of the concrete manifestations of ancestor worship.

In the brocade of the Zhuang people, patterns originating from myths and legends, such as Mlojia (M'luojia) and Bulotuo, can often be seen. These mythological figures have an important place in Zhuang culture and are regarded as the originators and deities of the Zhuang people.

Mlojia (M'luojia): As the fertility goddess of the Zhuang people, Mlojia often appears in brocade as a female figure surrounded by motifs that symbolise life and reproduction, such as flowers and fruits. These motifs not only demonstrate the Zhuang people's desire for fertility and reproduction, but also reflect the worship and veneration of M Luojia, the goddess of origin (Huang, 2006). Bluto: As the creator and founder god of the Zhuang people, the image of Bluto in brocade is often combined with natural elements such as heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, the sun and the moon, to show his divine power of creating all things and dominating nature. These motifs are not only a reproduction of the myths and legends of Bluto, but also a tribute to the wisdom and power of the ancestors (He, 2011). In Zhuang brocade, the images of mythical figures such as Mrojia and Bluto are vividly reproduced. These motifs not only demonstrate the Zhuang ancestors' understanding of the origin of the universe and the creation of mankind, but also reflect their reverence for their ancestors. As the goddess of fertility, the image of Mlojia is often combined with motifs symbolising life and reproduction, conveying the Zhuang people's longing for the continuation of life and their gratitude for the bounty of their ancestors. As the god of creation and ancestor, its image is often combined with natural elements such as heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, showing the Zhuang people's reverence and worship for nature and the divine power of their ancestors.

In Zhuang brocade, animal motifs occupy an important position. Among them, the patterns of poultry and livestock such as cows, sheep, chickens and ducks are especially common. These animals are not only important properties and production tools in the daily life of the Zhuang people, but also carry deep ancestor worship and family identity.

Cows and sheep: In traditional Zhuang culture, cows and sheep are seen as symbols of hard work and wealth. In brocade weaving, the motifs of these animals are often associated with family honour and ancestral merit. By displaying these motifs, the Zhuang people express their admiration for the diligence and wisdom of their ancestors, as well as their pride and expectation of the family heritage (Li, 2007).

Chicken and Duck: Chicken and duck motifs are also frequently seen in Zhuang brocade. These fowls are not only an indispensable source of food in daily life, but also carry the nostalgia and veneration for ancestors. In some areas, chickens and ducks are even regarded as mediums for communicating with the spirits of ancestors and play an important role in rituals.

The sacrificial and ceremonial motifs in Zhuang brocade, such as altars, incense, and magic vessels, also reflect the worship and veneration of ancestors. These motifs are not only the reproduction of sacrificial scenes, but also the inheritance of ancestral culture and faith traditions. Altar: In brocade, altar motifs are often combined with ancestral tablets, incense, offerings and other elements to show a solemn and sacred sacrificial atmosphere. These motifs are not only a record of ancestral sacrificial activities, but also an expression of the emotion of ancestor worship.

Incense and magic weapons: Incense and magic weapons are indispensable elements in sacrificial rituals. In brocade, these motifs are often presented in fine lines and rich colours, showing the familiarity and love of the weavers for the rituals. Through these motifs, the Zhuang people express their respect and nostalgia for the souls of their ancestors.

Ancestral cultural elements in Zhuang brocade, such as myths and legends, animal motifs and ritual motifs, reinforce the cohesion and identity within the community through the visual arts. These motifs not only reproduce ancestral culture and belief traditions, but also confirm and strengthen the identity and sense of belonging of the ethnic groups. By appreciating and passing on these motifs together, the Zhuang people have strengthened their ties and identity with each other, forming a closer ethnic community.

As an important carrier of Zhuang culture, the non-heritage characteristics of Zhuang brocade weaving, which is passed on orally and from generation to generation, determines the core position of the inheritors in the protection of this cultural heritage. Preserving the inheritors of brocade weaving skills is tantamount to preserving the precious intangible cultural heritage of Zhuang brocade weaving.

Ever since China initiated the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the importance of and support for inheritors has been a core strategy. Beginning with the Opinions on Strengthening the Safeguarding of China's Intangible Cultural Heritage, issued by the General Office of the State Council in 2005, the guideline of encouraging representative inheritors to carry out transmission activities was clearly stated. Subsequently, the Interim Measures for the Recognition and Management of Representative Inheritors of National Intangible Cultural Heritage Items (2008) and the Measures for the Recognition and Management of Representative Inheritors of National Intangible Cultural Heritage (2019) regarded representative inheritors of intangible cultural heritage as the backbone of intangible cultural heritage protection,

and through a strict vetting and official examination and approval process, a number of representative inheritors with outstanding skills and contribution to the transmission of the Zhuang brocade were selected and recognised as the representative inheritors. Through a strict review and official approval process, a number of representative inheritors with outstanding skills and contribution to the transmission in the field of Zhuang brocade were selected and recognised.

These recognised representative inheritors have not only gained wide recognition in the society, but also been given corresponding social status and economic benefits, becoming part of the Zhuang cultural elite. They not only enjoy the dividends brought by various non-heritage policies, such as participating in domestic and international exhibitions, receiving training and research training, etc., but also through their own influence, drive more people to pay attention to and participate in the Zhuang brocade culture.

As the researcher saw in the fieldwork, with the implementation of the system of representative bearers of NH heritage and the continuous expansion of its influence, the attitude of the Zhuang brocade inheritors has also changed significantly. From the initial passivity and even resistance to declare, to later actively strive for this honour, which fully demonstrates the high degree of recognition and pride of the identity of the "representative bearer of non-heritage" in the inheritance crowd. The establishment of this identity has not only stimulated the inheritor's enthusiasm for inheritance and innovation, but also laid a solid foundation for the continuous inheritance and development of the intangible cultural heritage of Zhuang brocade.

In the process of protecting the non-heritage of Zhuang brocade, the intervention of administrative power has not only constructed the honourable status of "representative inheritor", which is officially recognised, but also profoundly shaped people's identity. With the active intervention of the state, the originally obscure Zhuang brocade weaving technique and its inheritors have been given the noble status of non-heritage culture, and have received unprecedented attention and protection. These recognised representative inheritors have risen from being ordinary members of society to becoming cultural elites, and their lives and encounters have undergone radical changes as a result.

After enjoying the improved social status, increased economic benefits and various policy supports brought about by the change of identity, these representative inheritors have developed a strong sense of belonging and pride in their new identity. They have begun to cherish and pass on the Zhuang brocade skills, actively participate in the activities organised by the cultural authorities, and frequently interact with the public, further consolidating and strengthening this identity.

At the same time, the government has set up clear promotion paths and differentiated rights and benefits for representative inheritors at different levels

through the establishment of a step-by-step declaration system, which not only highlights the value and difference of the status, but also stimulates the desire and pursuit of the inheritors for a higher status. Under this system design, the status of representative inheritor becomes a strong incentive mechanism, prompting more brocade artists to devote themselves to the improvement of skills and cultural heritage.

To sum up, the effective intervention of administrative power in the protection of Zhuang brocade non-heritage has not only successfully constructed the honourable identity of the representative inheritor, but also strengthened the identity and inheritance power of the inherited people through the design of binding identity and rights and interests, injecting new vitality into the inheritance and development of the Zhuang brocade culture.

4.2.2.3 The function of gifts in the liturgy of life

Rituals not only symbolise an identity, but also serve as a bridge for people to communicate. As a member of society, an individual gains acceptance and recognition from the group and society by following specific rituals. As Mr Liang Shuming said, the essence of rituals lies in the composure, solemnity and concentration they show, rather than rashness and casualness (Liang, 1984). In the life of Zhuang people, birth ceremony, full moon ceremony, marriage ceremony, and funeral ceremony are all important ceremonial nodes that every person will experience. The joyful firecrackers at the arrival of a new life herald the beginning of life; while the funeral bells rung at the funeral ceremony announce the end of life.

The giving of gifts has always been the focus of academic attention. Whether it is the "Spirit of Gift" proposed by Moss, the "Kula Exchange" discovered by Malinowski, or the "Flow of Gift" explored by Yan Yunxiang, all of them reveal the deep meaning of the gift beyond the mere property of objects. Gifts are actually a way of maintaining people's relationship with each other. Gifts are in fact a kind of bond that maintains interpersonal relationships, and the cultural symbols they carry reflect the emotional integration between the giver and the recipient. Therefore, in the act of giving gifts, what is really valued is not the economic or use value of the gift itself, but the deep emotional and symbolic meaning embedded in it.

Zhuang brocade, as a traditional handicraft, not only embodies exquisite craftsmanship, but also carries rich ethnic cultural connotations. In the Zhuang community, brocade is often given as a precious gift. This gift is not only a piece of fabric, but also the transmission of deep emotions and culture of the Zhuang people. When Zhuang women give their hand-woven brocade as a gift to others, what they care about is not the market value of the brocade, but the deep friendship and respect for the recipient expressed through this gift. Such a gift is not only a material gift, but also a spiritual and cultural exchange, which coincides with the views expressed in the

above academic discussion on gifts. In the gift of Zhuang brocade, we can clearly see the important role of the gift as a connecting medium for interpersonal relationships, as well as the special emotional and symbolic significance it implies.

4.2.2.3.1 Zhuang brocade swaddling clothes in the birth ceremony

In the Longzhou region of Guangxi, the Zhuang people attach great importance to the birth of a new life. Before the birth of a child, as an older woman of the family, she will weave beautiful Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths in advance and give them to the newborn, and after the birth of the child, the grandmother will hold the child on the swaddling cloths with her own hands. As shown in Figure 49, these are the Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths provided by Ms Li Suying, the inheritor of the Longzhou Golden loong Zhuang brocade technique. In the interview with Ms Li Suying, she told the researcher that the Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths are used to wrap babies, and that after the child is born, the swaddling cloths will keep the baby warm, and that the Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths are usually woven with flowers because the flower symbols symbolise that the ‘Flower Woman’ will protect the child's healthy growth (Transcript of interview between researcher and Li Suying, 2024)



Figure 49 Zhuang brocade swaddling clothes

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

In addition to the Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths presented by the grandmother to the newborn baby, there is also a ceremony - ‘Worshipping the Flower Goddess’. In this custom, the ‘flower woman’ is regarded as a deity of fertility and child protection, and is greatly worshipped and honoured by the local people. According to local folk beliefs, newborn babies are regarded as sacred flowers planted

by the 'Flower Lady's family,' but these flowers do not come into the world easily. In order for these 'flowers', which symbolise newborn babies, to reach the earth, the Zhuang community performs the ceremonies of 'placing flowers' and 'building bridges'. These two ceremonies aim to build bridges to the earth and ensure the safe arrival of newborns.

During a visit to a village in Longzhou, the researcher was invited to observe the home of a Zhuang resident, Ms Huang, and gained insight into her family's unique practices regarding the Flower Goddess. In Ms Huang's home, the setup of the Flower Lady deity is relatively simple and plain. Similar to the common practice in some Han Chinese villages, she has placed a small incense burner by the leg of the bed in the main bedroom as a symbol of the Flower Lady's shrine. Whenever they pay homage to the Flower Lady, Ms Huang and her family insert incense into the burner, and the rising smoke carries their reverence and prayers for her. It is especially worth mentioning that when the baby reaches 30 days old, Ms Wong's family will place the Flower Lady's shrine on their own. During this process, there are no specific instructions on the orientation of the shrine, but it is decided according to the actual situation. During the New Year festivals, the rituals of worshipping the Flower Goddess are mainly handled by the elderly women in the family. They will carefully prepare offerings and worship with devotion to express their gratitude and respect to the Flower Lady. This custom not only reflects the respect for ancestors and gods in the Zhuang culture, but also demonstrates the important role of elderly women in the family in passing on and promoting traditional culture.

In the 'Anhua' ceremony, the Taoist priest or master prays, and at the same time make and tie a pillar of Zhuang brocade, which is carried to the bedroom door of the woman who is seeking a child by an old man who has many children and grandchildren. This act not only reflects the reverence for the Flower God, but also demonstrates the deep desire of the Zhuang community for fertility and family continuity. In addition, the 'bridge-building' ceremony is accomplished by building bamboo or red cloth bridges on the road. This process symbolises paving the way for newborns to reach the earth, and also signifies the community's warm welcome and acceptance of new life.



Figure 50 Worshipping the flower lady

Source: Lan Changlong(2024)

As shown in Figure 50, after the birth of a child, the family will hang a bamboo tube with an incense sticking out of it in a corner of the house, and offerings will be made to the Flower Woman on New Year's festivals, and the first time the shrine of the Flower Woman is installed, rituals need to be carried out, in which Zhuang brocade is an indispensable offering.

The common patterns on the swaddling clothes of Zhuang brocade include the 'dragon and phoenix combination' and flowers.

As a symbol of beauty in nature, flowers are closely associated with fertility and reproduction in Zhuang culture. According to legend, the Zhuang goddess of fertility, 'Flower Lady', is in charge of fertility affairs on earth, and newborn babies are regarded as flowers planted in the 'Flower Lady's house'. Therefore, the embroidered flower pattern on the swaddling cloth of Zhuang brocade is not only beautiful and generous, but also implies that the newborn will grow up healthily and blossom like a flower under the blessing of 'Flower Lady'. The choice of this pattern reflects the Zhuang people's respect for life and their pursuit of harmonious coexistence with nature.

The dragon and the phoenix have always been symbols of good fortune and honour in traditional Chinese culture. The dragon represents strength and wisdom, and is a symbol of imperial power; the phoenix symbolises beauty and happiness, and is often associated with good fortune and harmony. Embroidering the dragon and phoenix motifs on the Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths not only reflects the best wishes for the newborn's future, but also sends the family's high hopes for the newborn to become a dragon and phoenix among men and to have extraordinary achievements. The choice of this pattern not only highlights the Zhuang people's inheritance and promotion of traditional culture, but also reflects their infinite longing and expectations for the future of the family.

There are four main process segments to the birth ceremony.

The first is the preparation stage. Before the birth of a child, older women in the family will carefully weave Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths. They embroider flowers, dragons and phoenixes and other auspicious patterns on the swaddling clothes according to traditional customs and personal preferences. These patterns are not only beautiful and generous, but also contain deep cultural connotations and symbolism. After the weaving is completed, the swaddling cloths are kept in a safe place to await the arrival of the newborn baby.

The second is the stage of welcoming the newborn. When a newborn is born, family members will hold a grand welcoming ceremony. During this process, grandmothers will wrap the baby in Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths embroidered with flowers, dragons and phoenixes. This act not only provides warmth and protection for the baby, but also announces to the outside world how much the family values and expects the new life through the patterns on the swaddling cloth.

The third stage is the 'Hwaba' ceremony. While welcoming the newborn, the family will also hold the 'Worshiping the Flower Goddess' ceremony to thank the 'Flower Goddess' for the new life and to pray for the healthy growth of the child. During the ceremony, Zhuang brocade is offered as one of the sacrifices and may be woven into flower pillars or placed around the altar as decorations. These brocades are also embroidered with auspicious motifs such as flowers, dragons and phoenixes, which echo the atmosphere of the ceremony, creating a sacred and auspicious scene.

The fourth is daily offerings and remembrances. During the various stages of a newborn's growth, family members will express their gratitude and prayers to the spirits through worship and other activities. At this time, Zhuang brocade products embroidered with flowers, dragons and phoenixes may be placed on the shrines or altars of the family as offerings or decorations. These products are not only beautiful and rich in artistic value, but also carry the family's good wishes and expectations for the future.

The Zhuang brocade swaddling cloths and their floral, dragon and phoenix motifs are of great significance in the Zhuang birth ceremony. They not only provide warmth and protection for the newborn, but also convey the family's good wishes and expectations for the future through their rich cultural meanings and symbolism. Through the use of these patterns and ceremonies, the Zhuang people not only express their warm welcome and cherish the new life, but also pass on and promote their unique culture and values. Therefore, the application of Zhuang brocade swaddling clothes and its patterns in the birth ceremony has profound cultural significance and symbolic value.

From a cultural anthropological point of view, the practice of 'worshipping the Flower Goddess' reflects the deep concern of the Zhuang people for fertility and child development. Through the ritualised act, community members participate in the process of the birth and growth of a new child, thus strengthening the cohesion and sense of belonging of the community. At the same time, the custom also reflects the Zhuang culture's view of life and values, which emphasise the continuity of the family, respect for life, and reverence for nature and harmony.

4.2.2.3.2 Zhuang brocade straps in the child's full moon ceremony

The Full Moon Ceremony Wine for a newborn baby is an important celebratory ceremony in the life rituals of the Zhuang people. When a baby is one month old, parents will invite friends and relatives to gather at their home to celebrate the newborn's first month of life and to pray for his healthy growth. At the full moon wine, family and friends will present full moon gifts to express their congratulations. The most special and important gift is the Zhuang brocade strap woven by the grandmother, the Zhuang brocade strap is used to carry the child on the back, when the Zhuang girls work in the field, they can't spare their hands to hold the child, so they can only carry the child on the back with the help of the strap, as a very important gift for the full moon ceremony, it is usually knitted by the newborn's grandmother with the best fabrics and given with her own hands, which is a custom that embodies the treasure and blessing of Zhuang people for the new life. This custom reflects the Zhuang people's cherishing and blessing for the new life.



Figure 51 Zhuang brocade strap

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)



Figure 52 The effect of a Zhuang brocade strap to carry a child

Source: Home in Yanshan: https://www.sohu.com/a/150611618_708141)(2024)

Figure 51 is the flat schematic diagram of the Zhuang brocade straps, and Figure 52 is the effect diagram of the use of the Zhuang brocade straps, it can be seen that the Zhuang brocade straps from the material, the use of the main local fabrics, the middle is a large square fabric, on both sides of the two sides of the two colourful bands extend, like a person who opens his arms to embrace the others, the use of colours such as red, black, blue, and other bright and striking tones, the top of the full of flower pattern The colours used are red, black, blue and other bright and eye-catching colours, with flower patterns all over them, including big and small flowers, which can be used by simply wrapping the child and tying it to his back.

The Full Moon Ceremony of a newborn baby occupies a pivotal position in the Zhuang society, which is not only a good wish for the healthy growth of the newborn baby, but also an important moment for family reunion and cultural inheritance. In this ceremony, the Zhuang brocade carrier hand-woven by the grandmother serves as the core gift, and its unique Zhuang brocade pattern not only adds artistic beauty, but also contains deep cultural connotations and symbolism.

The common motifs on the backstrap of Zhuang brocade mainly include two categories, namely, floral motifs and auspicious totems, and the selection and application of these motifs are rich in symbolism.

Flower Patterns. Flowers are a symbol of life force in nature and are closely connected with the healthy growth of newborn babies. In the Zhuang brocade carrier, floral patterns are shown in bright colours and various forms, such as the richness of peony, the purity of lotus, the vitality of peach blossom, etc. These floral patterns not only add to the visual beauty of the carrier, but also send grandma's wishes for the newborn's future life. These floral motifs not only add to the visual beauty of the straps, but also convey Grandma's wishes for a colourful and flowery future for the new baby. Through the floral patterns, the Zhuang people express their reverence for the vitality of nature and their deep concern for the growth of new life.

Auspicious Totems. In addition to floral motifs, auspicious totems such as dragons and phoenixes often appear on the Zhuang brocade straps. As one of the totems of the Chinese nation, the dragon represents power and dignity; the phoenix is a symbol of beauty and harmony. The incorporation of these totems not only enhances the artistic value and ornamental qualities of the straps, but also signifies that the newborn will have extraordinary talents and a bright future. Grandma hopes that the newborn will be as powerful and courageous as the dragon, as beautiful and noble as the phoenix, and that he will have a lifetime of peace and prosperity. The choice of these auspicious totems reflects the Zhuang people's respect for traditional culture and their hopes for the future of the family.

In the specific process of the Full Moon Ceremony, the patterns on the Zhuang brocade straps play a unique role, and the arrangement of each link contains deep cultural significance and symbolic value.

Ceremony preparation stage. When Grandma weaves the Zhuang brocade carrier, she carefully selects the motifs according to traditional customs, personal preferences and family traditions. Floral motifs are preferred for their beautiful symbolism, while auspicious totems such as dragons and phoenixes are added on a case-by-case basis. These motifs are chosen to convey the family's love and blessings to the newborn through the visual arts. Focusing on the choice of decorations in the preparation stage of the ceremony is to better demonstrate the unique charm of Zhuang culture and the family's deep care for the newborn in the subsequent ceremonies. Through the exquisite design of the tattoos, Grandma demonstrates to her family, friends and guests her respect for traditional culture and the spirit of inheritance.

Gift-giving session with a display of decorations. At the full moon reception, grandmothers will personally present their newborns with beautifully embroidered Zhuang brocade backpacks. At this time, the floral patterns and auspicious totems on the straps become the centre of attention. By appreciating these motifs, guests not only feel the deep heritage and artistic charm of the Zhuang culture, but also appreciate the grandmother's deep love and affection for her grandson. The purpose of displaying the patterns of the Zhuang brocade straps in the gift-giving session is to let more people understand and appreciate the art of Zhuang brocade weaving while at the same time conveying the family's love and blessings to the newborns through this action. In addition, the public presentation of the Zhuang brocade straps also symbolises the family's recognition and acceptance of the new life, as well as their hopes for the continuation of the family in the future.

The backstrap is used in the session and the tattoos are symbolic. After the full-moon ceremony, the mother or female elders in the family will use the Zhuang brocade backstrap to carry the newborn on their backs. At this time, the floral patterns and auspicious totems on the straps seem to be transformed into guardian powers, providing invisible shelter and blessings for the newborn. The symbolism of these motifs is vividly reflected and conveyed in actual use. The focus on the symbolism of the decorations in the use of the carrier is to let the newborn baby feel the love and care of the family at all times in the process of growing up. These deep-meaning decorations not only add artistic beauty to the carrier, but also become a bridge connecting the past and the future, so that newborns can continue to receive the culture of the family and education in the process of growing up.

From a cultural point of view, the Zhuang brocade on the pattern of the strap core must be full of flower patterns, this is because in the concept of the Zhuang people, flowers and human reproduction has a close connection. Legend has it that the Zhuang goddess of creation, M'Liujia, was born in a flower.

In this regard, Liao Mingjun and Li Ni (2023) suggest in their study that in the Zhuang-inhabited areas, the people are convinced that the birth of a newborn child is the result of the act of ‘sending flowers’ by the flower goddess, M’Liujia. They regard red flowers as a symbol of girls and white flowers as a symbol of boys. What is even more amazing is that they closely link the newborn's physical condition with the growth of flowers, believing that the flourishing of flowers signifies a person's health, while the fading of flowers suggests a person's weakness. From this, it can be seen that the Flower Goddess, M’Liujia, is not only a deity in charge of fertility in the minds of the Zhuang people, but also the guardian of newborn babies. Before presenting the Zhuang brocade carrier to the newborn, grandmothers would first offer it to the Flower Goddess to pray for her blessing, so that the newborn would be free from illness and grow up strong.

For this, the researcher interviewed the local famous folklore, linguistics experts, Guangxi Chongzuo City Folk Literature and Artists Association, vice chairman of the Nong Ruiqun, he expressed: embroidered backpacks are special items used to carry babies, is the connection between the mother and the baby's important carrier, is an important item to care for the growth of infants. In the Zhuang region, the carrier is an indispensable object for every family. Different patterns and symbols are designed on the carrier, flowers are the most common, because flowers are the ancestor of the Zhuang people and are the symbol of the ‘Flower Woman’, which can get the blessing of the Flower Woman, but of course there are also other patterns, as the Zhuang people believe that ‘there are spirits in everything’, and believe that they can turn whatever they want into patterns. The Zhuang believe that ‘everything has a spirit’ and that they can turn whatever they want into a pattern, because these symbols can communicate with heaven and earth and bring them power (based on interview with Mr Nong Ruiqun, 2024).

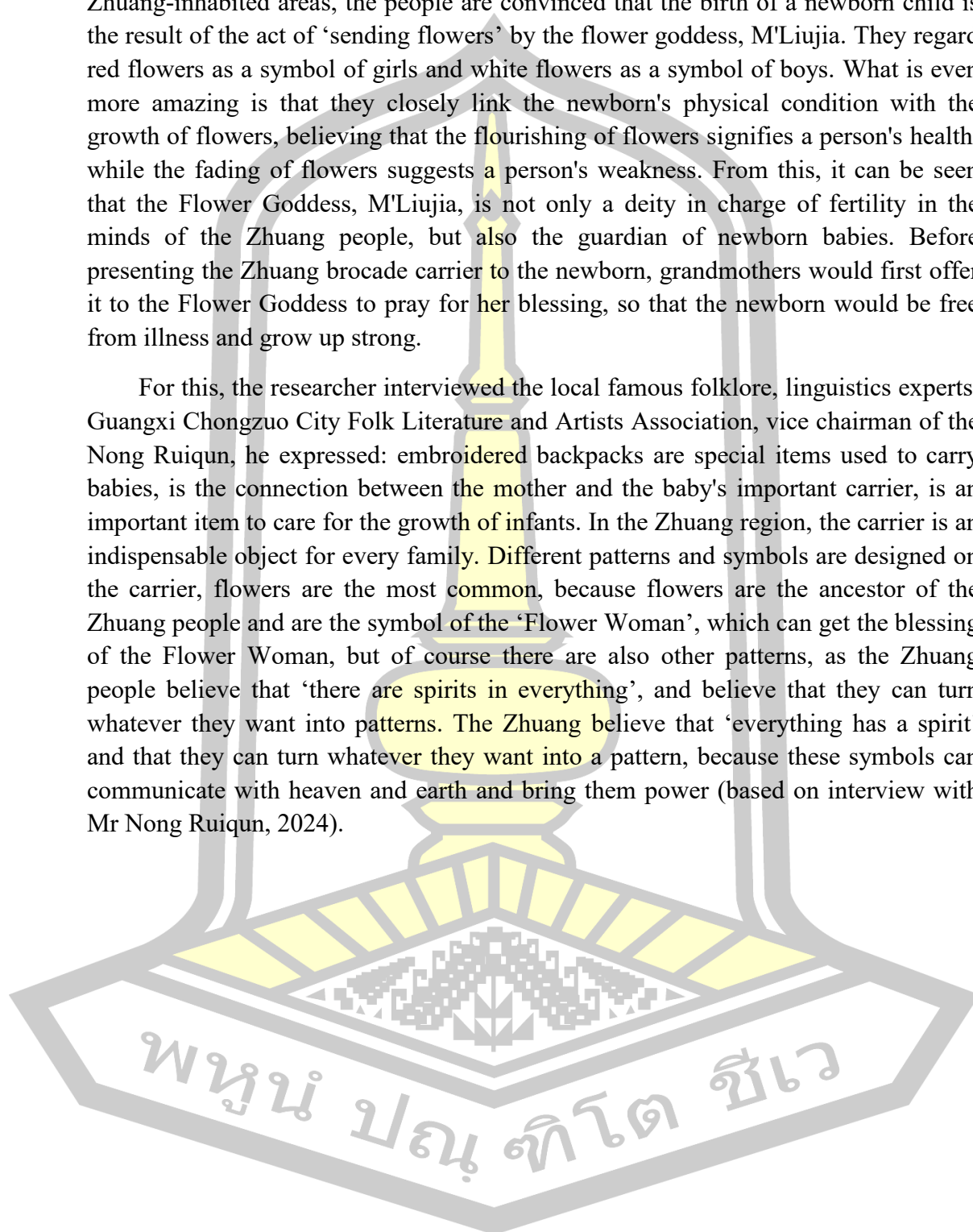




Figure 53 Mr Nong Ruiqun introducing the Zhuang brocade strap to the researcher, with the researcher on the left and Mr Nong Ruiqun on the right.

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

Gift exchange, as a social phenomenon, is not only the flow of material wealth, but also the exchange of emotions, power, obligations and expectations (Yan Yunxiang, 2017). This theory is vividly embodied in the Zhuang strap gifting practice. The gift of the Zhuang brocade strap is not only a blessing and care from the grandmother to her grandson, but also an important way of emotional exchange, maintenance of social relations and transmission of cultural meaning in the Zhuang society. Through this gift exchange process, the Zhuang people not only deepen their emotional ties with each other, but also work together to maintain community unity and harmony.

4.2.2.3.3 Zhuang brocade costumes and quilt covers in wedding ceremony

In the rich and colourful traditional culture of this ethnic group, the wedding ceremony occupies a pivotal position, where the distinctive woven fabrics, as unique cultural symbols, play a central role throughout the entire wedding process. These textiles not only demonstrate the community's aesthetic pursuits but also contain deep cultural meanings and good wishes. The purpose of this paper is to discuss in detail the use of these fabrics in wedding ceremonies, especially the choice of their decorations and specific applications in various aspects of the event.

During weddings in this cultural tradition, the fabric's decorations are full of symbolism and beauty, reflecting the community's desire and pursuit of a happy life. Common motifs include phoenixes, dragons, peonies, lotuses, butterflies, floral designs, cloud and thunder patterns, diamond shapes, and checkered patterns. Phoenix pattern: as a symbol of good luck and beauty, the phoenix pattern often appears on the bride's headband, belt and other clothing, implying that the bride is as beautiful and noble as the phoenix, and also sends the best wishes for the newlyweds' happy life.

Dragon pattern: The dragon is a symbol of honour and power, although it appears less directly on the bride's dress, it is sometimes incorporated into the detailed design of the brocade in a subtle form, echoing with the phoenix pattern, and together they form the beautiful imagery of 'dragon and phoenix presenting good luck'.

Peony pattern: Peony is known as the 'king of flowers', symbolising wealth and prosperity. It is widely used in Zhuang brocade to symbolise the wealth and good fortune of the newly married family.

Lotus pattern: Lotus is known for its purity and elegance, and is often used as an embellishment in Zhuang brocade, symbolising the purity and good quality of the bride.

Butterfly and flower motifs: Butterflies symbolise freedom and beauty, while flowers represent the prosperity and vitality of life. The combination of these motifs not only adds to the artistic beauty of the brocade, but also signifies the sweetness and harmony of the newlywed life.

Cloud Thunder Pattern: With its unique rhythm and mysterious colour, it is often used in the edge decoration or background decoration of Zhuang Brocade, signifying good luck and shelter.

Rhombus pattern and chevron pattern: these simple and bright geometric patterns are not only beautiful and generous, but also imply the stability and harmony of life, often appearing in the design of Zhuang brocade quilt tops.

The specific use of Zhuang brocade in the wedding ceremony. The Zhuang wedding ceremony usually includes four main links: receiving, sending, marriage and returning to the door, and Zhuang brocade plays an important role in these links.

Receiving the bride. When receiving the bride, the groom's family and friends form a welcoming party to the bride's home. Although Zhuang brocade does not appear directly as a gift in this link, the bride and her family often wear costumes with elements of Zhuang brocade to show the cultural heritage of the bride's family and the importance of the wedding. The Zhuang brocade patterns on these costumes are not only the embellishment of the bride's beauty, but also the creation of a solemn atmosphere for the wedding.

Giving away the bride. One of the highlights of a Zhuang wedding, the bride, accompanied by her friends and relatives, wears beautiful costumes such as a Zhuang brocade headband, belt and skirt, and carries a dowry of Zhuang brocade quilts to the groom's home. These Zhuang brocade costumes and quilts are often decorated with auspicious symbols, such as phoenix and peony, reflecting the deep affection of the bride's family for her, as well as expressing the best wishes for the future life of the newlyweds.

The Marriage Ceremony. The marriage ceremony is the centrepiece of the wedding, where the bride undergoes a series of traditional tests and performs a number of rituals with her groom. During this part of the ceremony, the bride's Zhuang brocade dress becomes the centre of attention. The beautiful decorations not only add to the bride's appearance, but also convey the deepest blessings of the bride's family to the newlyweds. At the same time, the elements of Zhuang brocade may also appear in the form of decorations at the wedding site, such as wedding candies wrapped in Zhuang brocade, wedding rooms decorated with Zhuang brocade, etc., which further enhances the festive atmosphere of the wedding.

Returning to the door link. On the third day after the wedding, the bride returns to the door with the groom to express her gratitude to the female parents and to receive the family blessing. When returning to the door, the bride may once again wear the Zhuang brocade costume to show the happiness and joy of the newlyweds. At the same time, the Zhuang brocade quilt top, which is part of the dowry, may also be part of the return gift, symbolising the continued care and blessings of the bride's family for the newlyweds.

Zhuang brocade in the Zhuang wedding ceremony not only appears as an exquisite gift, but also carries deep cultural connotations and symbolism. The choice of decoration and its specific use reflect the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of a better life, as well as the inheritance and promotion of traditional culture. Through the use of Zhuang brocade in weddings, the Zhuang people not only show their own aesthetic pursuit and cultural confidence, but also convey their good wishes to the newlyweds and deep expectations for the future of the family.

The Zhuang wedding ceremony is full of ethnic characteristics and mainly consists of four parts: receiving the bride, sending off the bride, becoming a bride and returning to the door. When receiving the bride, the bridegroom's relatives and friends form a welcoming team and go to the bride's house singing the Zhuang welcoming song. When sending off the bride, the bride wears fine costumes such as the Zhuang brocade headband, belt and skirt, and carries the dowry such as the Zhuang brocade cover set to the groom's home accompanied by her relatives and friends. During the marriage ceremony, the bride has to undergo tests such as raising the doorway and crossing the rice basin, drink a cup of wine with the groom, perform the ritual of three bows, and wear silver bracelets to symbolise good luck and happiness. On the third

day after the wedding, the bride returns to the door with the groom to express her gratitude to the woman's parents and receive the family blessing.

In the Zhuang wedding ceremony, Zhuang brocade-related gifts include Zhuang brocade clothing and Zhuang brocade quilt covers, Zhuang brocade clothing is the bride's family gift to the New Year's wedding, including the bride to wear the Zhuang brocade head scarf, belt, apron, etc., Zhuang brocade quilt covers is also the dowry given to the newlyweds, is the bride's family gifts to the newlyweds, which contains a good blessing from the mother's family to give the number of quilt covers and how good the quality of the bride's family can be seen! It is a gift from the mother's family to the newlyweds, which contains good blessings.



Figure 54 New Zhuang brocade wedding dresses

Source: CACE virtual expo(2024)

Figure 54 is the work of Li Xiangguang, a master weaver of Zhuang brocade, which is designed and made of mellow, simple and colourful Zhuang brocade, with weddings and wedding banquets as the application scenarios. The style of the costume is elegant and simple, or graceful and luxurious. The embroidered Zhuang brocade 'longevity flower', 'loong and phoenix pattern' and other patterns on the garment imply auspiciousness, good fortune and well-being. The work combines traditional Zhuang brocade with modern fashion, highlighting luxury and aesthetics in retro, presenting a unique ethnic style.

The Zhuang brocade quilt cover is shown in Fig. 54, and the cabinet towards which the two girls are pointing in the picture contains the Zhuang brocade quilt cover

for marriage. The Zhuang brocade quilt cover is used to wrap the cotton quilt core and protect the inner core of the cotton. It is colourful and vividly patterned, often with flora and fauna and geometric patterns as design elements, showing a warm and cheerful ethnic tone. In terms of materials, Zhuang brocade is mainly made of silk and cotton yarn, while the weft threads are made of colourful velvet, which are hand-woven to incorporate the weaver's feelings and wishes for a better life in the interweaving of warp and weft. The Zhuang brocade quilt cover is not only sturdy and durable, but also commonly used in dowry, symbolising the bride's hard work and wisdom, and also the embodiment of the Zhuang people's pursuit of and aspiration for a better life.



Figure 55 Zhuang brocade quilt cover at the Zhuang wedding

Source: Sina website:

httpsk.sina.cnarticle_2878339751_ab8ffaa701900p7ho.html (2024)

The Zhuang wedding to give each other Zhuang brocade behaviour a long time ago, recorded the history of the development of Longzhou Longzhou County Records have records: before 1949, the marriage of the male party to the female party to gift 100 kg of pork, 30 kg of glutinous rice, cloth 100 to 130 m, enough for the female party to do ten sets of clothes, a quilt, a mosquito net as a dowry. 1955 onwards, the male party to the female party to gift 100 kg of pork, 100 catties of rice, 100 catties of white wine, and 100 feet of cloth (Longzhou County Local Records Compilation

Committee, 2020). The cloth and fabric mentioned in the record are all Zhuang brocade.

From an anthropological point of view, the Zhuang brocade quilt cover was used as a dowry in weddings, which not only reflects the inheritance of material wealth, but also the transmission of cultural symbols. It carries the family's historical memory, aesthetic concepts and emotional values, and is a bridge between the past and the future. Through the gift of the brocade quilt cover, the bride shows her in-laws her family's brocade weaving skills and cultural heritage, and at the same time symbolises the bride's wisdom, hard work and her beautiful vision of future life. This act of exchange not only strengthens inter-family ties, but also promotes cultural inheritance and exchange.

According to cultural theory, the Zhuang brocade quilt cover is an important carrier of national culture, reflecting the living customs, religious beliefs and aesthetic concepts of the Zhuang people. In weddings, the patterns and colours of brocade quilt cover often signify good luck, happiness and satisfaction, and they send people's good wishes to the newlyweds. At the same time, the production process of brocade quilt cover also reflects the wisdom and creativity of Zhuang women, and is a reflection of their social status and value. Therefore, the use of brocade quilt cover in weddings is not only a blessing to the newlyweds, but also an affirmation of and respect for the value of Zhuang women.

4.2.2.3.4 Zhuang brocade in funeral ceremony

If the joyful firecrackers at the arrival of a new life herald the beginning of life; the funeral bells sounded at the funeral ceremony announce the end of life. Zhuang funerals are deeply influenced by their concept of the immortality of the soul and ancestral beliefs. These beliefs permeate the funeral behaviour, which holds that death is not the end of life, but a transition to the regeneration of the soul. This concept constitutes the core idea of Zhuang funerals, making them not only a farewell to the dead, but also an arrangement to appease the spiritual world of the living and the destination of the dead's soul. This is evidenced by the accounts of interviewees during the researcher's visit to Longzhou, where it is widely believed that people become ghosts after death, and that these ghosts go up to heaven to be reunited with their ancestors, and that when they get to heaven they eat the joss sticks that are offered by their descendants on a daily basis (transcripts of the researcher's interviews with the interviewees, 2024).

People of the Zhuang ethnic group are committed to the concept of serving the dead as if they were alive, that is, they see their dead relatives as living beings in a different dimension. For this reason, Zhuang people attach great importance to funerals, which are usually held for about three days, and with the help of Taoist priests and masters, they allow their loved ones to do their farewells through rituals,

as well as allowing the souls of the deceased to travel to another dimension without getting lost. In such an important ceremony of communication between heaven and earth, offerings are obviously essential, and Zhuang brocade is one of the most important offerings in this ceremony.



Figure 56 Family members of the deceased at the funeral wake

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

As shown in Figure 56, it is the deceased's family members holding a wake at a funeral. The black square in the centre is the coffin containing the deceased, and on both sides of the coffin are the deceased's relatives, who are bidding a proper farewell to the deceased and guarding the deceased's soul at the same time. The Zhuang people believe that the soul exists eternally, and that the departed's soul will not dissipate immediately after passing away, but rather, it will linger on earth for a certain period of time. A wake is meant to accompany and guard the soul of the deceased, ensuring that it is cared for and respected by the family at the beginning of its life. During the wake, the family expresses their sadness and remembrance of the deceased through continuous weeping, prayers and offerings.

A Zhuang funeral is a process full of rituals and traditional practices that reflect respect and mourning for the deceased. The following is an overview of Zhuang funerals:

Sending off the dead: When an elder dies, the family hangs a strip of white sand paper by the front door to report the death, and the deceased is groomed and given a

new outfit. Two immediate family members will kneel in front of the spirit and cry as a sign of sending off the deceased. At the same time, the body of the deceased needs to be placed horizontally on the bed, not sleeping straight, which has specific beliefs and symbols.

Inviting water: When wiping and dressing the deceased, family members will go to the river or well to get ‘inviting water’, which will be boiled and used to wipe the deceased's body and wash his/her face. During this process, the next of kin will accompany the deceased and kneel down to cry.

Down to the ground: After wiping the body and changing clothes, the deceased is laid flat on a mat in the hall and covered with red, white and black cloths, which is called ‘down to the ground’.

Waking up: During the period when the coffin is parked, the family will invite the Taoist priest to come and perform a series of rituals. Every morning and evening, the dutiful sons and daughters will set up their washing utensils in front of the coffin and cry a lot, and the Taoist priest will perform a series of rituals as well. This is to awaken and invite the deceased to get up and wash as they did before they were born.

Condolences: On the eve of the funeral, friends and relatives come to offer their condolences, bringing incense and offerings to pay tribute to the deceased.

Funeral: At the funeral, the filial sons and daughters will kneel in the road to pave the way for the deceased. Afterwards, they support the funeral procession, with the Taoist priest as the guide and friends and relatives following. After arriving at the cemetery, the wooden coffin is put into the ground, and the filial son first shovels the soil to make the coffin, and then the carriers pile up the soil to make the grave.

Specific Customs: For those who are over 80 years old, there are some specific customs at the funeral, such as drinking, guessing, grabbing tableware, etc., which means that they hope that their children and grandchildren will become long-lived people.

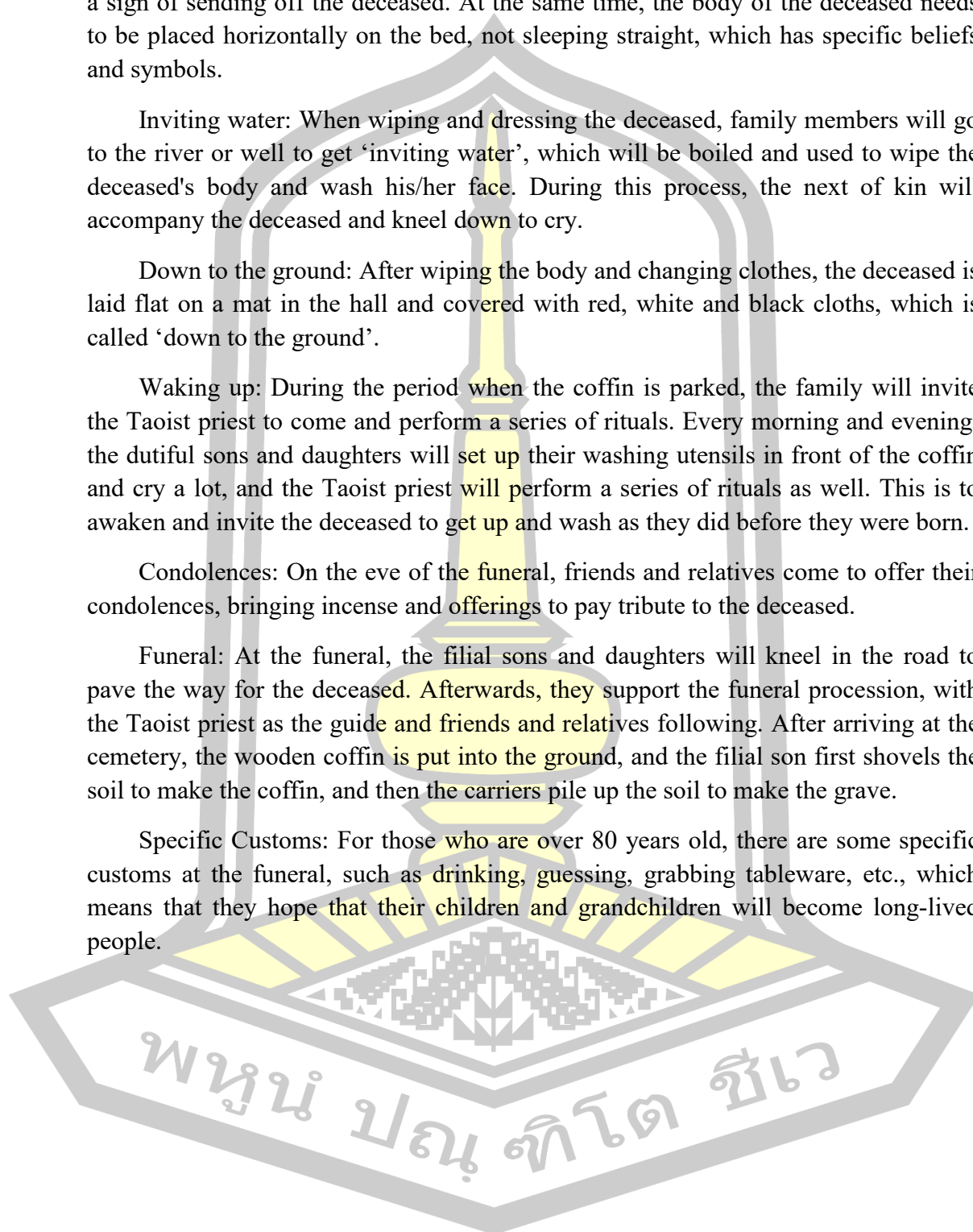




Figure 57 Zhuang brocade used as an offering in funeral rites

Source: Li Suying, 2023



Figure 58 Zhuang brocade used as an offering in funeral rites

Source: Li Suying, 2023

As shown in Figures 57 and 58, These Zhuang brocades are used to offer sacrifices to the deceased, and Zhuang brocades are mainly used in two parts of the process, namely, going down to the ground and offering condolences. The selection and use of Zhuang brocade as sacrificial offerings in Zhuang funerals profoundly

reflects the unique understanding of the Zhuang people's concept of life and death and their deep emotions towards the deceased. In the following, we will discuss in detail the choice of decorations, the symbolism of Zhuang brocade offerings, and their specific applications in each part of the funeral.

In the selection of patterns for Zhuang brocade offerings, local people prefer to use cloud patterns and water ripples, flower and plant patterns, dragon and phoenix patterns, butterfly and fish patterns, octagonal patterns and diamond patterns.

Cloud patterns and water ripples: In Zhuang culture, clouds and water are regarded as symbols of the endless cycle and source of life in nature. Cloud patterns are often presented in smooth and rhythmic lines in Zhuang brocade, representing the vastness and mystery of the sky; water ripples imitate the fluctuations on the water surface, implying the flow and endlessness of life. The use of these natural elements in Zhuang brocade at funerals is intended to express the good wishes that the souls of the deceased can float freely like clouds and be endless like water waves.

Flower and plant patterns: Flowers and plants are often given symbolic meanings of life and reproduction in Zhuang culture. Lotus, peony and other floral patterns are common in Zhuang brocade. They are not only beautiful and generous, but also imply the prosperity and eternity of life. The use of Zhuang brocade with these floral patterns at funerals is not only a commemoration of the deceased's good life, but also a prayer for the deceased's soul to rest in peace and continue life.

Dragon and Phoenix Patterns: Dragon and Phoenix are symbols of nobility and auspiciousness in Zhuang culture. Dragon patterns often represent strength and wisdom, while phoenix patterns represent beauty and harmony. The use of Zhuang brocade with dragon and phoenix patterns at funerals is not only a respect and recognition of the deceased's status during his lifetime, but also a hope that the deceased's soul can be blessed by dragons and phoenixes and rest in heaven.

Butterfly and Fish Patterns: Butterflies symbolize freedom and beauty, while fish represent abundance and abundance every year. The use of these auspicious totems in Zhuang brocade not only adds to the artistic beauty of the offerings, but also expresses the living's remembrance and yearning for the deceased's good life.

Octagonal and Diamond Patterns: Octagonal patterns have special symbolic meanings in Zhuang culture, and are sometimes regarded as symbols of the sun or auspiciousness; diamond patterns are deeply loved for their stable and harmonious beauty. The use of these geometric patterns in Zhuang brocade not only reflects the aesthetic taste of the Zhuang people, but also implies good wishes for the soul of the deceased to rest in peace and family harmony.

The specific application of Zhuang brocade offerings in various links of the funeral is mainly reflected in the link of going to the ground and the link of condolences.

Link of going to the ground. After the death of the deceased, the family will change the shroud for him and lay it flat on the mat in the hall. This process is called "going to the ground". At this time, the family will choose red, white and black Zhuang brocade to cover the deceased. Red Zhuang brocade represents the beautiful memories of the world and the deceased before his death, implying the vitality and enthusiasm of life; white Zhuang brocade symbolizes the purity and tranquility of the sky, implying the rest and sublimation of the soul of the deceased; black Zhuang brocade represents the stability and solemnity of the earth, implying mourning and respect for the deceased. These different colors of Zhuang brocade match each other, which not only reflects the Zhuang people's profound understanding of the view of life and death, but also expresses their deep feelings for the deceased.

Condolence link. On the eve of the funeral, relatives and friends will come to pay their respects to the deceased. At this time, they will bring various offerings, including Zhuang brocade, to express their condolences and respect for the deceased. The auspicious totems and natural element patterns on the Zhuang brocade offerings not only add to the atmosphere of the mourning scene, but also let the living feel a sense of comfort and hope in grief. The selection and use of these offerings reflect the calmness and calmness of the Zhuang people in the face of death and their deep affection for the deceased.

The selection and use of the patterns of Zhuang brocade offerings in Zhuang funerals not only show the unique charm and artistic value of Zhuang culture, but also deeply reflect the unique understanding of the Zhuang people's view of life and death and their deep feelings for the deceased. Through these exquisite Zhuang brocade offerings and their specific application in various aspects of the funeral, we can get a glimpse of the rich spiritual world and cultural heritage of the Zhuang people.

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, Zhuang funeral is not only a way to deal with the dead, but also a reflection of social culture. It strengthens the cohesion of the family and society through a series of ceremonial activities, and passes on the cultural traditions and belief concepts of the nation. At the same time, the funeral also provides an opportunity for the living to face death and think about the meaning of life, which helps them find solace and strength of mind in their grief.

To sum up, Zhuang brocade carries profound social and cultural functions and has an irreplaceable role in the development of Zhuang society. It is not only a carrier for the inheritance of skills and culture, but also a bond of national identity and emotional connection. Through oral and mental education, Zhuang brocade passes down the weaving skills and national cultural wisdom from generation to generation,

shaping the unique national aesthetics and values. In terms of cultural identity, the rich decorations and patterns of Zhuang brocade have become the distinctive symbols of Zhuang culture, strengthening the cohesion and pride within the community. In the important ceremonies of life, Zhuang brocade, as a precious gift, conveys blessings and respect, deepens interpersonal emotional ties, and promotes community harmony and unity. Therefore, Zhuang brocade culture is not only a display of beauty, but also a cornerstone of social structure and cultural inheritance, which is of great significance in maintaining social stability and promoting national development.

4.3 Inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

The Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique occupies an important place in the local community and economy. It is facing a crisis due to the influence of modernisation and foreign cultures. The research objective of this section is the crisis and countermeasures faced by the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills. A mixed qualitative and quantitative research methodology was adopted, combining fieldwork tools such as literature analysis, field observation and in-depth interviews, and data were collected with the help of tools such as interview outlines, observation record forms, literature analysis forms and non-scale questionnaires. The sample of the study in this section consisted of 6 key informants, 12 practice informants and 20 general informants and the data analysis methods of descriptive statistics and hypothesis testing were used. It was ultimately found that the brocade weaving skill is facing a crisis of a significant decrease in the number of weavers, a general ageing of key skill masters, and a generally low level of social recognition of weavers, and that the main reasons for these crises include shifts in the economic structure, changes in family structure, and the complexity of the skill itself. In this regard, this study proposes countermeasures such as setting up relevant majors in vocational colleges and universities, implementing the modern apprenticeship system, deepening school-enterprise cooperation, and strengthening education on cultural confidence and value identity.

4.3.1 Places and spaces for the inheritance of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

The Panchi Village of Shuangmeng Village in Jinlong Town and the Happy Home Community in Shukou Town under the jurisdiction of Longzhou County are currently the two most important Zhuang brocade production sites in Longzhou County.

The Happy Homeland Community is located in Shuikou Town, and as the town centre area, the community blends modern facilities with traditional Zhuang culture to form a unique cultural landscape. Although not a traditional brocade weaving village, the Happy Homeland Community maintains a sense of heritage of the brocade weaving technique and promotes its development among the younger generation through cultural activities and skills training. The Happy Home Community is a large

community with 2,382 residents spread across 551 households. There are about 43 families mastering the art of brocade weaving, and the number of looms is 12. 46 people in the community still persist in brocade weaving, which is currently carried out under the unified leadership of Ms Li Suying, the Guangxi Zhuang brocade Longzhou inheritor. Due to the problem of uneven orders, the studio has flexible working hours, usually gathering the weavers to work in the studio only when there are orders, and if there are no orders, the weavers will go out to do part-time work most of the time.

These two geographical points represent different contexts of tradition and modernity, village and community, respectively, and provide valuable field research resources for a comprehensive and in-depth study of Zhuang brocade weaving techniques in Longzhou.

See Figure 59 below for a town outline map of Shukou Town in Longzhou County, and Figure 60 for Ms Li Suying, the head of the Zhuang brocade weaving workshop in the Happy Home community and one of the most famous local brocade weaving technique inheritors, who was demonstrating the local Zhuang brocade weaving technique to the researcher while he was doing fieldwork in Shukou Town in Longzhou.



Figure 59 Ms Li Suying is showing researchers the art of Zhuang brocade weaving technique at the Zhuang brocade workshop in the Happy Home community

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

Banchi Village, Shuangmeng Village, Jinlong Town, is located to the east of Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Chongzuo City, Guangxi Province, and is the main residence of the Zhuang people, known for its rich ethnic culture and traditional brocade weaving skills. In recent years, the ‘Intangible Heritage + Poverty Alleviation’ project has brought new development opportunities for the local brocade weaving skills. Banchi Village, Shuangmeng Village, Jinlong Township, is a Longzhou Zhuang brocade heritage production base and one of the first 10 ‘Intangible Heritage + Poverty Alleviation’ employment workshops in China. The establishment of the workshop has realised the ‘productive protection’ and ‘promotional inheritance’ of traditional handicrafts, provided employment platforms for left-behind rural women and women from poor families, and enabled them to realise ‘weaving brocade at home and generating income at home’. ‘In 2018, 38 women from Banchi Village joined the workshop, 43 in 2019, and nearly 60 in 2021. In 2024, of the 180 households in Banchi Village, 55 are involved in the production of Longzhou Zhuang brocade workshop, with the oldest being 76 years old, and the youngest being only 12 years old, and 18 of them are poor households. 18 poor households.



Figure 60 Traditional buildings in a corner of Ban Chi Village

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)



Figure 61 Demonstrating brocade weaving technique at the Zhuang brocade weaving base in Banchi village

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

Table 2 Genealogy of Zhuang brocade inheritance in Li Suying's family in Banchi village, Shuangmeng village, Jinlong township

Generat ion	Name	Sex	Nati on	Birth year	Educatio nal attainme nt	Mode of transmis sion	Ti me to lear n the art	Relations hip between the older and younger generatio ns
First generati on	Huang Shiliu	wom en	Zhua ng	not quite clear	illiteracy	passed on from ancestors	not quite clear	not quite clear

Second generation	Huang Shipian	women	Zhuang	March 1909	illiteracy	passed on from ancestors	not quite clear	mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, teacher and disciple
Third generation	Huang Meizhu	women	Zhuang	May 1934	private school (in former times)	passed on from ancestors	1950	mother and daughter, teacher and disciple
Fourth generation	Qin Xiuqing	women	Zhuang	November 1954	primary school	passed on from ancestors	1970	mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, teacher and disciple
Fifth generation	Li Suying	women	Zhuang	August 1977	junior high school	passed on from ancestors	1989	mother and daughter,

Source : Fan Daozhi (2019)

4.3.2 Inheritors of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

As shown in Table 1, this is a map of Zhuang brocade inheritors in Longzhou, Guangxi, which records the intergenerational inheritance relationship of the most representative local Zhuang brocade skills, and in 2024, Li Suying became the latest generation of inheritors.



Figure 62 Ms Luo Suying introducing the working principle of the loom in the workshop

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

Longzhou Zhuang brocade is one of the four famous brocades in China and a treasure of Guangxi's ethnic culture. In December 2018 Longzhou County's declaration of Zhuang brocade weaving techniques was listed as one of the seventh batch of autonomous region-level representative projects of intangible cultural heritage to be protected. Li Suying is the representative inheritor designated in the project's declaration. Li Suying, female, Zhuang, born in August 1977, lives in Banchi Village, Shuangmeng Village, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Chongzuo City. She learnt brocade weaving skills from her family when she was a child, and at the age of 12, she could weave Zhuang brocade, which is the fifth generation of Zhuang brocade inheritor. She has a unique and exquisite conception, rigorous and exquisite weaving skills, bright and generous colours, and her Zhuang brocade is sold both at home and abroad, and is highly praised by people from all walks of life.

From 2012 to 2018, the Zhuang brocade made by Li Suying has participated in the Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition for 7 consecutive years, among which, in August 2012, the Zhuang brocade work 'Golden loong Zhuang Brocade' won the Bronze Prize in the first Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition; in October 2013, the Zhuang brocade 'loong State' was awarded the Bronze Prize. Golden loong Five-coloured Zhuang' won the bronze medal of "Bagui Tiangong Award" in the

second Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition; in September 2015, its Zhuang brocade “Ruyi Tianyuan” won the bronze medal of “Bagui Tiangong Award” in Guangxi Arts and Crafts Exhibition. In September 2015, its Zhuang brocade ‘Ruyi Fields’ won the ‘Bagui Tiangong Award’ excellence award; in November 2018, its Zhuang brocade works ‘dark flowers’ won the 2018 Guangxi Arts and Crafts works Bagui Tiangong Award encouragement award.

Over the years, Li Suying has been invited to participate in various national folk culture activities held by counties, cities and autonomous regions, to show their own brocade works to all walks of life. 2018, Li Suying was invited twice with the delegation of Chongzuo City, went to Beijing to participate in CCTV's 2018 ‘Charming China City’ competition, and its wonderful brocade performance in the competition scene was noticed by the whole country, and made a great contribution to Chongzuo City to win the championship of the competition. The wonderful brocade performance in the competition scene was noticed by the whole country and contributed to Chongzuo City's winning the championship of the competition.



Figure 63 Display of one of Li Suying's award certificates

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

In addition, Li Suying has visited Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi Institute of Arts, Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities and other colleges and universities, as well as the Guangxi Museum of Nationalities and Chongzuo Zhuang

Museum, to teach brocade weaving skills to students and brocade enthusiasts over the years, and has made selfless dedication to letting more people know about brocade, and to pass on and protect brocade weaving skills. In June 2016, Li Suying participated in the 'Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education of China Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors Workshop Training Programme - Guangxi brocade weaving skills inheritance crowd training course', and obtained the certificate of completion issued by the organisers. In December 2017, Li Suying was awarded the title of Master of Arts and Crafts of Chongzuo City.

4.3.3 Inheritance crisis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Despite the important historical and cultural value of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills, its inheritance and development still face many challenges. Currently, brocade weaving skills inheritors are generally aging, and the younger generation lacks interest and participation in brocade weaving skills, leading to a crisis of talent disconnection in the inheritance of the skills (Gao, Chen, & Jiang, 2017). At the same time, with the acceleration of modernisation and the impact of foreign cultures, the market demand for traditional brocade weaving skills has gradually shrunk, and the economic benefits have declined, which further exacerbates the predicament of skills inheritance (Song, Zhang, Chen, & Shi, 2024).

Previous studies on weaving techniques have yielded substantial findings, shedding light on the historical backgrounds and cultural significance of these crafts and offering insightful discussions on their relevance in modern times. For instance, Lu Qiong (2019) underscored the pivotal role of ethnic textiles, particularly those of the Zhuang ethnicity, as vehicles of cultural expression. Through an examination of the evolution and transformations of Zhuang textile traditions, Lu highlighted the potential for integrating traditional motifs into contemporary designs. Wang Mei (2022) explored the historical roots, artistic attributes, current transmission status, and developmental strategies of weaving expertise in Longzhou, Guangxi, focusing specifically on the Zhuang ethnic group's textiles. By analyzing the transmission mechanisms and challenges facing these skills, Wang proposed several avenues for sustainable growth, such as integrating advanced technology, innovating marketing approaches, and fostering a sense of innovation among practitioners. Fan Zhidao (2019) provided a comprehensive overview of the historical progression, loom designs, weaving procedures, cultural and artistic traits, and current transmission status of weaving techniques in Longzhou, Guangxi, with a focus on the Zhuang ethnic group's contributions. Utilizing a range of research methodologies, including oral history interviews and on-site investigations, Fan elaborated on the distinctive qualities of these skills and introduced an innovative transmission model involving multi-stakeholder collaboration, such as government support, association coordination, and practitioner engagement, to address transmission challenges.

To gain insights into the contemporary situation of textile production in Longzhou, particularly the specific manifestations of the crises being faced, the researcher employed interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and on-site observations. As illustrated in Figure 64, the researcher engaged with local community members in Longzhou to inquire about the current livelihood and production circumstances of weavers. Following the survey, the researcher summarized the concerns raised by the locals.



Figure 64 The researcher visits interviews in Longzhou

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

4.3.3.1 Low number of weavers

In the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills survey conducted for Banchi Village and Happy Home Community in Longzhou County, the contrasting data reveals a significant decrease in the number of weavers. Specifically, the total number of people in Banchi Village is 798, distributed among 183 households, of which only 60 households have someone who can weave brocade, and the number of looms is 78, but the number of people actually weaving has plummeted to 23, which is only about one-third of the number of people who can weave. At the same time, 375 people in Banchi Village work outside the village, accounting for nearly half of the total number of people, further highlighting the loss of manpower for the inheritance of the skills. In terms of age structure, there are only two young artists under the age of 25,

while there are as many as 41 old artists over the age of 60, reflecting the crisis of the generation break in the inheritance of the skills.

In contrast, although the total population of the Happy Home community reaches 2,382 people and the total number of households is 551, the number of households with someone who can weave brocade is only 43, accounting for an even lower percentage. The number of looms has even decreased significantly to 12, indicating an extreme shrinkage of brocade weaving activities. Although the number of active weavers is relatively high, at 46, the proportion of those who weave is still unsatisfactory, and given the size of the community, this figure actually reflects a general weakening of the transmission of the skill. In addition, the number of migrant workers in the Happy Home community is as high as 826, which also accounts for a significant proportion of the total number of workers, exacerbating the plight of skill transmission. In terms of age distribution, the two communities show a similar trend, with a scarcity of young artists and a higher proportion of old artists. There are also only three artists under the age of 25 in the Happy Homeland Community, and seven artists over the age of 60, which further confirms the urgency of the inheritance of the skills.

In summary, the data from both Banchi Village and the Happy Home Community clearly point to a significant decrease in the number of weavers and a serious challenge to the inheritance of the skills.

Table 3 Basic statistics of Zhuang brocade weaving techniques in Longzhou county

Investigative projects	Banchi village	Happy home
Total number of people	798	2382
Total number of households	183	551
Number of households with someone who knows how to weave brocade	60	43
Number of looms	78	12
Number of people who can weave	60	47
Number of people in the weaving	23	46
Number of persons working outside the home	375	826
Number of artists under 25 years of age	2	3
Number of artists over 60 years of age	41	7

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

4.3.3.2 Fewer and older weavers mastering key skills

Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving, a handmade skill that carries deep ethnic cultural heritage, has a superb process that includes nine complex steps such as splitting performance, spinning, drawing, pouring, dyeing, sizing, winding, warping, and loading (Fan, 2019, p. 54). Among them, the warp-drawing technique is particularly crucial, which is not only the core link in transforming the design into a brocade template, but also the most important thing to ensure the brocade pattern is accurately rendered.

Warp drafting is the process of carefully weaving cotton threads into a pre-determined pattern in the bamboo weave on the upper part of the brocade loom, where all the mysteries of the pattern are hidden in the cotton threads on the outside of the bamboo weave. This process requires a high degree of precision and patience, as even the slightest mistake can lead to deviations or errors in the patterns in the subsequent weaving. Especially for brocade weaving with complex patterns, the difficulty of drawing in the warp is further increased, requiring the weaver to weave the yarns with even more delicate skills to ensure that the final pattern is perfectly rendered.

However, we are currently facing a serious problem: very few weavers have mastered this key skill, and most of them are old. In Banchi Village and Happy Home Community, for example, there are 60 and 47 weavers in the two communities who can weave brocade, but there are only three and one weaver respectively who are skilled in drawing-in, and they are all over 50 years of age, and some of them are even over 70 years old. This status quo not only highlights the urgency of the inheritance of the warp-drawing technique, but also exposes the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills facing the crisis of talent fault.

Table 4 Basic statistics on Zhuang brocade weaving techniques in Longzhou county

Investigative projects	Banchi village	Happy home
Total number of people	798	2382
Number of people who can weave	60	47
Number of people who have mastered warp-drawing techniques	3	1
Number of artists under 25 years of age	0	0
Number of artists over 25-60 years of age	0	1

Number of persons over 60 years of age	3	0
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Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

4.3.3.3 Low social recognition of weavers

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the social recognition of Zhuang brocade weavers, the researcher designed interview questions covering six areas: income, social reputation, media coverage, cultural heritage, educational support and employment prospects, and interviewed 68 local weavers and residents, with a view to comprehensively evaluating the social status of Zhuang brocade weavers and the challenges they face.

The data obtained from the interviews reveal that the social acknowledgment of weavers is generally limited. Regarding income levels, a significant proportion of 77.9% of the interviewees perceived that the earnings of those engaged in ethnic Zhuang textile weaving were either low or very low. In terms of social prestige, over half (64.7%) believed that these weavers held a mediocre or low status. Simultaneously, 70.6% of respondents stated that they rarely or never encountered any coverage on ethnic Zhuang textiles or their weavers in mainstream media, further highlighting the societal disregard for this occupation. Additionally, only 14.7% expressed a strong willingness to impart this craft to their offspring, while a notable 79.4% declared unawareness or never having heard of educational institutions offering courses related to the art of ethnic Zhuang textile weaving, reflecting a limited societal awareness. Lastly, concerning employment prospects, 75.0% of the participants expressed pessimism regarding the job opportunities for rural weavers of ethnic Zhuang textiles. Collectively, these findings indicate a generally low recognition of ethnic Zhuang textile weavers in contemporary society.

Table 5 Statistical table of the survey on social recognition of Zhuang brocade

Options	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Low or very low	53	77.9
Conveniently situated	8	11.8
High or very high	7	10.3
Fair or low	44	64.7
High or very high	11	16.2

Inconclusive	13	19.1
Rarely or never	48	70.6
Non-recurrent	10	14.7
Now and then	10	14.7
Low or very low	41	60.3
Usual	17	25.0
High	10	14.7
Don't know or haven't heard	54	79.4
Knowing that there is a relevant course	7	10.3
I've heard of it but I'm not sure.	7	10.3
Not optimistic or very optimistic	51	75.0
Pessimistic	7	10.3
Inconclusive	10	14.7

Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)

4.3.4 Causes of the inheritance crisis

This section analyses the multiple reasons for the decline in the number of Zhuang brocade weavers in Longzhou, the advanced age of the weavers who have mastered key skills, and the low social recognition of the weavers. From the shift in economic structure and changes in family structure to the complexity and learning cycle of the skills themselves, to the lack of social reputation and media publicity, and insufficient support for cultural transmission and education, these factors together constitute a serious challenge to the inheritance of the Zhuang brocade skills. Through detailed data and interview analyses, the researcher reveals the deep-rooted reasons behind this problem, providing an important basis for finding effective solutions.



Figure 65 Group photo of the researcher and local folklore expert

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

As shown in Figure 65, in order to understand the reasons behind the crisis, the researcher, in addition to consulting the literature and making field visits to ask local residents, also asked Mr Nong Ruiqun, a famous local folklore expert, for advice. In Figure 65, the photo location is Mr Nong Ruiqun's home in Longzhou, the researcher is the first one on the left in blue, the second old gentleman on the left is Mr Nong Ruiqun, the third one on the left is Mr Nong's grandchildren, and the fourth one on the left is Ms Li Suying.

4.3.4.1 Reasons for the low number of weavers

In delving into the complex reasons for the continued decline in the number of Zhuang brocade weavers, i.e., the inheritors, in Longzhou, it is obvious that this is not the result of a single factor, but a phenomenon interwoven by multiple social, economic and cultural factors. The formation of this inheritance dilemma is in fact a reflection of broader social changes and cultural shocks.

We must note the far-reaching impact of the structural transformation of the economy on the traditional crafts industry. With the ever-increasing pace of modern industrialisation, mechanised mass production has rapidly replaced traditional manual production methods. This shift has not only greatly improved production efficiency, but also reduced production costs, making handicrafts in the market competitiveness gradually weakened. The ethnic Zhuang textile, a distinctive handicraft, has witnessed a gradual decline in market demand amidst the wave of industrialisation, leading to a

decrease in its economic benefits. This escalated economic pressure has compelled numerous villagers, who were originally engaged in the craft of ethnic Zhuang textile weaving, to seek employment outside their communities in pursuit of higher economic gains and an elevated standard of living. This shift has directly resulted in a significant reduction in the number of ethnic Zhuang textile weavers, posing an unprecedented challenge to the continuation of this traditional skill.

Alterations in family structure have also undoubtedly impacted the transmission of the ethnic Zhuang textile weaving technique. Over the years, the implementation of family planning policies and evolving modern familial ideologies have caused the traditional extended family structure to gradually give way to smaller, nuclear families. Within this new familial framework, the younger generation is often presented with a broader array of life choices and developmental opportunities. They are more likely to opt for more efficient and modern career paths, rather than investing time in the ethnic Zhuang textile weaving craft, which offers relatively lower economic returns. This transformation has directly contributed to a notable decrease in the younger generation's interest and willingness to carry on the ethnic Zhuang textile weaving tradition, resulting in a conspicuous gap in its transmission.

The intricacy of the ethnic Zhuang textile weaving technique itself, coupled with the extended learning curve, constitute significant factors that hinder the emergence of new practitioners. Ethnic Zhuang textile weaving encompasses not only a skill but also a fusion of culture and art. It demands weavers to possess exceptional craftsmanship, coupled with a profound comprehension and appreciation of traditional culture. Mastering this craft, however, is not a swift accomplishment but requires extensive practice and experience. This substantial barrier dissuades many potential learners, further amplifying the scarcity of successors. Simultaneously, the modern educational system exhibits a relative deficiency in systematic training and promotion of traditional handicrafts, leading to a profound lack of understanding and acknowledgment of ethnic Zhuang textile skills among the younger generation.

4.3.4.2 Reasons for the scarcity and age of weavers mastering key techniques

As a valuable intangible cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, the inheritance and protection of Longzhou Zhuang brocade faces many challenges, one of which is the scarcity and age of weavers who have mastered the key techniques. The reasons for this phenomenon can be attributed to the following aspects.

The learning process of brocade weaving is complex and time-consuming, especially the warp-drawing technique, which requires a high degree of precision and patience (Fan, 2019, p. 54). The fast-paced life of modern society makes young people more inclined to choose career paths with quick results rather than investing a lot of time and energy in learning this traditional skill. As a result, the number of

young people who are willing to learn and master brocade weaving skills in depth is gradually decreasing.

The transmission of brocade weaving skills relies mainly on the family or master-apprentice system, and this mode of transmission restricts the wide dissemination of the skills (Huang, 2022). In Longzhou, many weavers pass on their skills within their families, but this method of transmission often makes it difficult for the skills to break through the limitations of geography and bloodline, thus limiting the popularity and development of the skills. In addition, due to the long and difficult learning cycle of brocade weaving, many young people, even if they are interested, find it difficult to find suitable masters for systematic learning.

Economic interest is also an important reason for the age of the weavers who have mastered the key skills. Although brocade weaving skills have profound cultural value, but in the current market economic environment, its economic benefits are relatively limited. Many young people choose to go out to work or engage in other more lucrative industries in order to make a living, while the weavers who stay in their hometowns are mostly elders who are older and have deep feelings for the brocade weaving technique. Although these elders are highly skilled, due to age and physical limitations, it is difficult for them to engage in brocade weaving for a long period of time, which leads to difficulties in passing on the skills.

4.3.4.3 Reasons for low social recognition of weavers

When exploring the reasons for the low social recognition of Zhuang brocade weavers in Longzhou, we can make an in-depth analysis from multiple dimensions. Firstly, economic factors are an important reason for the low social recognition of weavers. According to the interview and survey data, the income of weavers is generally low, and as many as 77.9% of the respondents believe that the income of Zhuang brocade weavers cannot meet the basic needs of life, which directly affects the social attractiveness and recognition of the occupation.

The lack of social reputation is also a key factor in the weavers' low social recognition. More than half (64.7%) of the respondents said that Zhuang brocade weavers have an average or low social reputation, and this negative social evaluation limits the occupation's status and recognition in society. Society tends to view traditional handicrafts as obsolete skills and lacks full recognition and respect for the value of weavers' labour.

The lack of media publicity further exacerbates the problem of social recognition of weavers. 70.6% of the respondents pointed out that they seldom or never saw reports about Zhuang brocade or Zhuang brocade weavers in the mainstream media, which indicates that society's attention to and publicity for this important cultural heritage and its inheritors are seriously insufficient. The absence of the media as an

important channel for information dissemination has directly led to the marginalisation of Zhuang brocade weavers in the public eye.

The lack of cultural heritage and educational support is also an important reason for the low social recognition of weavers. The results of the interviews show that only 14.7% of the interviewees expressed their willingness to pass on the Zhuang brocade skills to the next generation, while as many as 79.4% of the interviewees said that they did not know or had not heard of any schools or institutions offering courses related to the skills. This suggests that the lack of effective educational support and popularisation measures in the process of passing on the Zhuang brocade skill makes it difficult for the skill to attract the interest and participation of young people.

4.3.5 Inheritance strategy

Regarding the role of vocational education in the inheritance of skills, Qian Yihui and Huang last night (2013) pointed out that the cultivation of intangible cultural heritage professionals needs to improve the education system, strengthen the government's functions, and promote vocationalisation and multi-disciplinary exchange and collaboration. Gao Han et al. (2017) explored the problems faced by intergenerational inheritance of rural handicrafts, and took Tujia brocade in western Hunan as an example, proposing vocational education countermeasures to promote the inheritance and development of rural handicrafts by establishing specialities, standardising school curricula, carrying out school-based training, and building innovative platforms. Taking Suzhou embroidery as an example, Ye Shengyan and Jia Limin (2011) analysed the inheritance of traditional handicrafts and put forward innovative talent cultivation modes such as 'order-type cultivation', 'master's studio system' and the intervention of modern education technology, aiming at enriching and expanding the path of cultivating talents in traditional handicrafts. Handicraft talent cultivation path. Sun Jiapeng et al. (2023) explain the necessity and logical starting point of diversified training of traditional handicraft talents in vocational colleges and universities, construct three training modes: academic education, vocational training, and academic education + vocational training, and put forward promotion strategies such as strengthening the survey of student sources and establishing a modularised curriculum system.

In response to the talent crisis faced by Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills, this part proposes the comprehensive strategies of setting up majors related to Zhuang brocade skills in vocational colleges and universities, implementing the modern apprenticeship system and skills re-education, as well as promoting education and publicity and economic incentives in parallel. By setting up specialities, broadening enrolment channels and deepening school-enterprise cooperation, the aim is to solve the problem of insufficient weavers. At the same time, the weavers' skills will be upgraded through the traditional master-apprentice system, combined with modern vocational education, and the skills re-education programme will be used to promote

the inheritance and innovation of the skills. In addition, strengthening education on cultural self-confidence and value identity, enhancing publicity and promotion, and formulating income multiplication plans have improved the weavers' social recognition and economic status in a multi-dimensional way, thus inspiring more young people to devote themselves to the inheritance and development of brocade weaving skills. Together, these strategies constitute a comprehensive programme to promote the sustainable development of the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique.



Figure 66 The researcher is asking education experts for advice on countermeasures

Source: Luo Yongteng(2024)

As shown in Figure 66, the researcher is asking experts and scholars in the education sector for advice on countermeasures to the crisis, this photo is presented from the left, the first from the left is Professor Qin, the second from the left is Professor Lu, and the third from the left is Dr Yans, and under the guidance of the experts and with the demands of the local residents in Longzhou, the following suggestions are made.

4.3.5.1 Establish majors related to Zhuang brocade weaving techniques in vocational colleges and diversify enrolment

When dealing with the challenge of insufficient number of weavers, vocational colleges and universities can start from various aspects to effectively promote the inheritance and development of Zhuang brocade skills through strategies such as setting up specialised majors, broadening enrolment channels and deepening

school-enterprise cooperation. The implementation effects of these strategies are further analysed through specific examples below.

Vocational colleges and universities should proactively address market demands by establishing specialties in traditional textile crafts and cultural industries, with a focus on the unique skills associated with Zhuang fabrics. This field of study demands meticulous curriculum planning that integrates classic weaving methods with contemporary design principles and marketing strategies, fostering a teaching approach that equally emphasizes theoretical knowledge and practical application. By incorporating local cultural elements, educational institutions can shape a distinct major in Zhuang textile techniques and cultural industries.

Courses offered within this major should encompass fundamental training in traditional Zhuang weaving practices, including pattern design, loom operation and maintenance, digital patterning, and the development of culturally inspired creative products. Through a balanced educational model that blends theory and practice, students are equipped with a solid foundation in weaving techniques, enabling them to merge traditional craftsmanship with modern design aesthetics and elevate their proficiency in Zhuang textile production.

To effectively address the shortage of skilled weavers, vocational colleges and universities should pursue diversified enrollment pathways. Besides admitting students from regular high schools, institutions can collaborate with secondary schools to implement a seamless '3+2' vocational training program, attracting graduates from these schools to further their education. Simultaneously, they can align with Chinese government initiatives that provide specialized admission opportunities for groups like war veterans, displaced workers, and rural youths, tailoring personalized educational programs to their unique backgrounds.

For instance, veterans could be offered a 'Skill Enhancement Class for Retired Soldiers' that merges Zhuang weaving skills with military supply design, leveraging their military experience. Rural youths, on the other hand, might benefit from a 'Rural Revitalization Artisan Class' that combines these skills with the creation of rural tourism products, aligning with local economic growth objectives. Such initiatives not only broaden the student population but also foster diverse talent pools, opening up new avenues for the preservation and advancement of Zhuang textile arts.

To bolster students' practical abilities and market readiness, vocational colleges should forge long-term, stable partnerships with local Zhuang textile enterprises or artisan cooperatives. Through these school-enterprise collaborations, students gain valuable exposure to real-world production projects and the opportunity to master the intricacies of Zhuang weaving techniques. For example, institutions can partner with businesses to organize 'Zhuang Textile Product Innovation Design Competitions',

encouraging students to apply their knowledge in creative ways and potentially have their designs adopted for market release.

Additionally, industry experts can regularly visit campuses to deliver lectures and guidance, imparting industry insights and market trends. By deepening these collaborative efforts, students not only enhance their practical skills and market adaptability but also forge strong connections with potential employers, laying a solid groundwork for future careers or entrepreneurial ventures. Meanwhile, businesses reap the benefits of accessing a talent pool rich in innovative spirit and market savvy, creating a mutually beneficial environment.

4.3.5.2 Implement the modern apprenticeship system and skills re-education

Drawing on the advantages of the traditional master-apprentice system and combining it with the characteristics of modern vocational education, implement the 'master-apprentice' and 'modern apprenticeship system'. Drawing on the essence of the traditional Chinese teacher-apprentice system and combining it with the systematic advantages of modern vocational education, the school implements the 'master weaving class', inviting local famous old Zhuang brocade weavers as instructors, and adopting the one-to-one or small-class teaching mode to personally guide the students to master the key skills of Zhuang brocade weaving. At the same time, the school works closely with enterprises to combine the learning process with the actual production process, and students participate in enterprise projects under the leadership of their mentors to enhance their practical ability through real work scenarios. This teaching mode can not only effectively inherit the traditional skills of Zhuang brocade weaving techniques, but also cultivate students' sense of innovation and market adaptability.

Carry out skills upgrading and re-education programmes. For the middle-aged and elderly artisans who have been engaged in ethnic textile weaving but whose skills still need enhancement, skills upgrading and re-education programmes are implemented. Vocational colleges and universities can collaborate with local governments to organise 'workshops to advance the skills of ethnic textiles'. Through brief yet intense training sessions, the workshop welcomes sector specialists and proficient instructors to educate weavers on the latest design ideologies and methods. The proposed curriculum encompasses colour coordination, pattern design, application of new materials, etc., aiming to assist artisans in adapting to evolving market preferences. Additionally, vocational institutions can liaise with local authorities to periodically organise experience-sharing gatherings, thereby motivating middle-aged and older weavers to impart their expertise and experiences to the younger generation, fostering a positive cycle of skill transmission. Through this array of measures, not only can the proficiency of middle-aged and elderly artisans be enhanced, but also the dissemination and promotion of ethnic textile skills among youths can be advanced.

Establishing a designated fund for supporting the preservation and innovation of the craft. Governments and social organisations can create specialised funds to back the continuation and creativity of ethnic textile crafts. To inspire more individuals to dedicate themselves to preserving and evolving ethnic textile techniques, the government can raise funds and utilise the collected monies to form the ‘Ethnic Textile Technique Preservation and Advancement Fund’. This fund will primarily invest in individuals or collectives that have made remarkable contributions to skill continuation, product development, and market expansion. By offering fiscal assistance, organising competitions, and hosting expositions and presentations, the fund aims to kindle the passion and ingenuity of ethnic textile practitioners.

4.3.5.3 Parallel education, publicity and economic incentives

Strengthen education on cultural self-confidence and value identity. In dealing with the problem of low social recognition of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weavers, the first task is to strengthen education on cultural self-confidence and value identity. This requires the vocational education system to incorporate ethnic textile weaving skills into the curriculum, not only teaching the skills themselves, but also digging deeper into the cultural significance and historical value behind them. For example, ‘Ethnic Textile Culture Week’ can be set up in the vocational education programme, through expert lectures, field trips, cultural exhibitions, and other forms, so that students can experience and feel the unique charm of ethnic textiles, and understand its important role in the national cultural heritage. At the same time, value identity education is integrated to emphasise the preciousness of traditional handicrafts as intangible cultural heritage and the irreplaceable role played by each weaver in the inheritance and development, so as to inspire students' pride and sense of mission and enhance their social recognition of textile weaving skills.

Strengthen publicity and promotion. Vocational education institutions can co-operate with local governments, cultural departments, and the media to jointly plan a series of promotional activities. For example, a series of interviews with ‘the inheritors of ethnic textile weaving’ can be launched on internet platforms (e.g., short video platforms and social media) to show the weavers' exquisite skills and the stories behind them, so as to increase the public's interest in and understanding of textile weaving. In addition, ‘Ethnic Textile Cultural Festival’ or ‘Textile Skills Competition’ can be held, inviting people from all walks of life to participate, and letting more people experience the charm of textile skills and expanding its social influence through display, competition, experience, and other forms. At the same time, it actively promotes the integration of textile products with modern design, develops innovative products that meet market demands, improves their competitiveness in the market, and thus enhances the weavers' sense of professional honour and social recognition.

Develop an income multiplication plan to improve the income of Zhuang brocade weavers. In order to fundamentally solve the problem of low social recognition of weavers, it is crucial to implement the income multiplication plan. This requires that vocational education should not only cultivate weavers' skills, but also enhance their market awareness and business capacity. Vocational education institutions can join hands with industry associations and enterprises to provide weavers with training courses in marketing, branding and e-commerce operations, helping them to understand market demand and broaden sales channels. At the same time, explore the establishment of the 'artisan + enterprise + market' mode of cooperation, and encourage weavers to cooperate with enterprises to carry out large-scale production or customised services, so as to improve production efficiency and economic benefits. The government can also introduce relevant policies, such as the establishment of a special fund to support the industrialisation of brocade weaving, and give incentives and subsidies to outstanding weavers to raise their income levels. Through these measures, the weavers' economic situation will be improved, and their social status will naturally be raised, which in turn will form a virtuous circle and attract more young people to join in the inheritance and development of brocade weaving skills.

To sum up, Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills, as an intangible cultural heritage carrying a deep historical and cultural heritage, is currently experiencing a sharp decline in the number of weavers, aging skills and low social acceptance and other multiple crises. In order to cope with these challenges, it is necessary to adopt a multi-pronged approach of government guidance, education and popularisation, skills inheritance and economic incentives. Through vocational colleges and universities to set up related professional, school-enterprise cooperation, modern apprenticeship and other modes of training new forces; at the same time, strengthen the cultural confidence education, enhance the social value of brocade weaving skills identity, to attract more young people to join them. Only through the joint efforts of all sectors of society can this national treasure blossom into a new glory in the context of the new era.



CHAPTER V

Conclusion, Discussion And Suggestions

This chapter is divided into three main sections, the first section is written as the findings of this study i.e. the conclusion section, which summarises the findings of the three research objectives in section 4 respectively. The second section is written as the discussion section, which discusses the research text and the main research concepts respectively. The third section is the recommendation section, which makes suggestions to future researchers and also gives suggestions for utilising the results of this research.

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5.1 Conclusion

5.1.1 History and development of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

The beginning of textile technology appeared before 202 BC. At this stage, Guangxi, as an important production area of hemp crops, laid a natural foundation for the rise of Zhuang brocade weaving techniques. Archaeological data show that hemp weaving objects have appeared in Guangxi during the Warring States period (476 BC to 221 BC), which marks the initial formation and maturity of the region's textile technology and provides technical preparation for the subsequent development of Zhuang brocade weaving.

From 202 BC to 220 AD, the textile technology was upgraded. Entering the Han Dynasty, the textile technology in Guangxi region was significantly upgraded, which was specifically manifested in the emergence of textile tools such as ceramic spinning wheels, the application of which greatly promoted the development of the textile handicraft industry. In addition, historical records show that the Zhuang ancestors at this time have mastered the more skilled textile technology, for the sprouting of the Zhuang brocade provides the necessary technical support, heralding the initial formation of the Zhuang brocade weaving techniques.

From 220 to 1368 AD, the formal manifestation of the ethnic textile culture emerged as weaving techniques reached maturity. During the Tang and Song dynasties, this ethnic textile, for the first time referred to as 'ethnic brocade', was officially documented in canonical books, signifying the early establishment of its cultural identity. In the Song Dynasty, this ethnic brocade stood out for its 'white square pattern', robust yet elegant, and was highly favored among nobility and tribal leaders. By the Yuan Dynasty, the mastery of ethnic textile weaving had advanced, introducing a broader palette and intricate designs, reflecting profound expertise and distinctive creativity within the weaving art of this ethnic group.

From 1368 to 1912 AD, the pinnacle of textile weaving proficiency gained widespread recognition. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the ethnic textile craftsmanship attained its apex, earning a reputation as one of the 'Four Celebrated Brocades' and being offered as a tribute to royalty, thus affirming its exceptional

artistic merit and prestige. Within society, the production and usage of ethnic textiles became widespread, extending beyond clothing to become an essential component of marital gifts and other ceremonial items, thereby deeply influencing the living traditions and cultural patrimony of this ethnic community.

Between 1912 and 1949, the market flourished, fostering both the preservation and innovation of these skills. During the Republic of China era, the ethnic textile market thrived under the influence of commercialization. For instance, merchants in Xincheng County achieved notable annual sales. Simultaneously, the continuance and advancement of these skills persisted, as exemplified by Liang Shuying and other eminent figures who, through their studies and inventions, shaped ethnic textile techniques with regional distinctiveness, further enriching the cultural significance and artistic expression of these ethnic textiles. From 1949 to the present, the exploration of collective production and the revival under the challenge of modernisation.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the implementation of the socialist system, the ethnic textile industry gradually shifted towards collective manufacturing. Significant government support has breathed new life into the growth of this ethnic textile sector. Nevertheless, with the onset of modern manufacturing, the ethnic textile industry faced hardships in the 1990s, leading to a decline in production scale. Recently, however, thanks to collaborative efforts between the government and various industries, the ethnic textile craft has gained renewed attention and backing. Through cultural preservation, technological advancements, and market expansion, these textiles have undergone a revival, serving as a vital medium to showcase the distinctive allure of ethnic culture. This journey not only testifies to the resilience of ethnic textile craftsmanship but also mirrors the enduring legacy and evolving trends of traditional Chinese culture in contemporary society.

As shown in Table 6, the historical evolution of Longzhou Zhuang brocade is divided into six stages, as follows:

Table 6 Chronology of events in the history and development of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Period	Time scale	Thrust
Initial laying of textile technology	Before 202 BC	Guangxi, as a hemp crop production area, the initial formation of textile technology, laying the foundation for the rise of Zhuang brocade weaving

Enhancement of textile skills and tool development	202 BC to 220 AD	Textile skills improved, tools such as ceramic spinning wheels appeared, and the Zhuang ancestors mastered skilled textile techniques.
Formalisation of Zhuang brocade culture and maturation of the technique	220-1368 AD	Zhuang brocade was officially recorded, with a mature technique and a wealth of colours and patterns
The pinnacle of the art and its wide social acceptance	1368-1912 AD	The Zhuang brocade technique has reached its peak and is known as one of the "Four Famous Brocades", which is widely accepted and used by the society.
Market Prosperity and Skill Inheritance and Innovation	1912-1949	Prosperous market of Zhuang brocade, technology inheritance and innovation, forming Zhuang brocade with local characteristics
The Quest for Collective Production and Revival under the Challenges of Modernisation	1949-present	Collectivisation and the challenges of modernisation have led to a gradual revival of the brocade industry with the support of the government and society.

Source: Lou Yingteng (2024)

5.1.2 Symbols of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

5.1.2.1 Categories of decorative motifs and their cultural significance

Through in-depth analyses of the semiotic features of Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns, this section comprehensively reveals the complex relationship between energetic and referential in Zhuang brocade patterns, further deepening the understanding of traditional Zhuang culture and artistic expressions.

Firstly, in terms of geometric motifs, the ethnic textile exhibits rich symbolic meanings through its distinctive decorative techniques. The chevron pattern, a fundamental geometric element, creates a stable visual impression via the intricate

weaving of warp and weft threads. Its dynamic representation takes the form of a regular square pattern, reflecting the ethnic group's reverence for order, stability, and their homeland. The rhombus and circle patterns, through various transformations and combinations, form aesthetically pleasing and symbolic designs. These symbols represent harmony and perfection respectively, showcasing the artistic elegance and idealistic vision of life inherent in the ethnic group's culture. The cloud thunder pattern, with its fluid lines and continuous forms, embodies the might and mystery of nature, highlighting the ethnic group's deep respect for the natural world.

Secondly, plant motifs play a significant role in the ethnic textile, enhancing its aesthetic appeal and conveying profound cultural significance. The octagonal pattern, characterized by its symmetrical design and rich symbolism, denotes both the natural occurrence of octagonal fruits and the ethnic group's aspiration for fertility and prosperity. Meanwhile, the motifs of chrysanthemums and peonies, rooted in themes of purity and wealth respectively, express the ethnic group's pursuit and admiration for a better life through delicate linework and vibrant hues. The resilient image of the bamboo motif signifies the character and spiritual aspirations of the ethnic group, while the distinctive form of the gourd motif represents the perpetuation of life and familial prosperity.

In the realm of mythological and animal motifs, the ethnic textile's patterns reveal the ethnic group's reverence and imagination of the natural world through figurative or abstract representations. The phoenix and loong motifs, as mythical creatures, embody majesty and beauty, becoming iconic elements in the textile and symbolizing fortune, strength, and wisdom. On the other hand, bird and tiger patterns are centered around themes of freedom and courage, conveying the ethnic group's admiration and respect for the creatures of nature through exquisite detailing and dynamic lines. Additionally, butterfly and fish motifs enrich the textile's variety and symbolic depth, representing lightness and bounty respectively.

Furthermore, the incorporation of Chinese characters within the ethnic textile constitutes an integral and noteworthy aspect. For instance, symbols like swastikas, 'fortune', and 'longevity' are seamlessly integrated into the textile's weave, elevating its cultural significance and conveying the ethnic group's desires and aspirations for an auspicious and fulfilling life. The skillful blend of weaving techniques not only enhances the textile's cultural value but also expresses the ethnic group's profound yearning for good fortune and happiness. These Chinese characters are rendered in neat fonts and orderly arrangements, reflecting the beautiful visions and blessings inherent in the ethnic culture.

The interplay between form and meaning in the patterns of Longzhou ethnic textile profoundly reflects the distinctive charm and rich cultural significance of the ethnic group. By employing a semiotic analysis approach, we can delve into the decorative and aesthetic virtues of these patterns while also uncovering the deeper

cultural and symbolic meanings they embody. In our future research and preservation efforts, it is imperative to continue exploring the semiotic traits of these patterns, fostering innovation and growth within the traditional ethnic culture, and allowing this national treasure to shine brightly in the modern era.

As Table 7 illustrates, this table organizes the patterns of Longzhou ethnic textile based on semiotic classification, presenting both the signifier (the tangible form of the symbol) and the signified (the meaning or concept represented by the symbol) for each symbol. This structured approach aids in gaining a clearer understanding of the cultural significance and symbolic value inherent in the patterns of the ethnic textile.

Table 7 Categories and meanings of Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns

symbols	Symbolic form	Symbolic description	The signifier	The signified
Geometric pattern	Chequered pattern	Regular square pattern, formed by interweaving warp and weft threads	Checkered pattern	Order, stability, homes
	Rhombus pattern	Quadrilateral pattern with opposing corners, stable and harmonious form	Rhombus pattern	Harmony, perfection, circulation
	Circular pattern	Circular or nearly circular patterns	Circular pattern	Perfection, harmony, perfection
	Cloud and thunder pattern	Composite pattern formed by the combination of cloud pattern and thunder pattern	Combination of cloud and thunder pattern	Continuous, unending, auspicious.

Plant pattern	Octagonal pattern	Geometric figure with eight acute angles extending outwards	Octagonal pattern	Fertility, homes, stability
	Chrysanthemum pattern	Delicate outline of chrysanthemum form	Chrysanthemum pattern	High purity, longevity and good fortune
	Peony pattern	Peony in full bloom form	peony pattern	Rich, prosperous and beautiful
	Bamboo pattern	Bamboo stem and leaves combination	Bamboo pattern	Resilience and high morale
	Gourd pattern	Circle-like pattern consisting of two expanded parts at the top and bottom	Gourd pattern	Life multiplies, family flourishes, good fortune
Mythological and animal pattern	Loong Pattern	Intricate patterns based on loongs or pythons	Loong or python pattern	Strength, wisdom, honour and good fortune
	Phoenix pattern	Figurative or abstract motifs in the form of a phoenix	Phoenix pattern	Auspiciousness, happiness, beauty
	Bird pattern	Patterns of various bird forms	Bird pattern	Freedom, spirituality, auspiciousness

	Tiger pattern	Figurative or abstract patterns in the form of a tiger	Tiger pattern	Courage, strength, good luck.
	Crab pattern	Figurative patterns in the form of crabs	Crab pattern	Tough, protective, auspicious
	Butterfly pattern	Figurative or abstract patterns in the form of butterflies	Butterfly pattern	Freedom, beauty, happiness, rebirth
Chinese character pattern	“卐”pattern	Crossed symbols that form a rotationally symmetrical pattern	“卐”pattern	Auspicious, wandering, bright
	"Fortune", "longevity", etc.	Neatly written Chinese characters	Typeface of Chinese character	Auspiciousness, happiness and longevity

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

5.1.2.2 Longzhou Zhuang brocade patterns: an interpretation of Zhuang culture under Geertz's theory of cultural symbols

Through an in-depth interpretation of the symbolic culture of Zhuang brocade, we can get a glimpse of the deep heritage and unique charm of Zhuang culture. Within the framework of Clifford Geertz's theory of cultural symbols, this study analyses the various types of decorative symbols in the Zhuang brocade, revealing the rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings of these symbols.

Firstly, the reverence for nature is evident in the intricate designs of Zhuang textiles. Elements from the natural world, such as mountainous landscapes, flowing rivers, flora, and fauna, are skillfully woven into the fabric's patterns, serving as a medium for the Zhuang community to commune with nature and solicit its blessings. The incorporation of these organic motifs not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of

the textiles but also communicates the Zhuang people's deep respect for nature and their belief in harmonious coexistence.

Secondly, the veneration of fertility, which is a cornerstone of Zhuang culture, is vividly expressed in these textiles. Symbols of fecundity and life renewal, such as blooming flowers, gourd shapes, and frogs, reflect the Zhuang ancestors' yearning for the perpetuation of life. These motifs are not just artistic representations; they are also vehicles for preserving and promoting the cultural values of fertility through the craft of weaving. The use of these fertility symbols enriches our understanding and appreciation of the Zhuang culture's emphasis on procreation.

Moreover, totemism plays a significant role in the designs of Zhuang textiles. Mythical creatures like the phoenix, dragon, and tiger, which are not only visually striking but also culturally significant, are often featured. The inclusion of these totemic motifs reveals the Zhuang forefathers' reverence and awe for the enigmatic forces of nature, while also representing their aspirations and striving for a more prosperous life.

Table 8 Relationship between symbols and nature and deeper cultural meanings

symbol	Symbolic meaning	Source	culture
Mountains, rivers, flora and fauna, etc.	Reverence for the natural world and harmonious coexistence	Patterns of natural elements commonly found in Zhuang brocade, such as the sun, water ripples, loong patterns, fish patterns, etc.	Nature worship
Flowers, gourds, frogs, etc.	Reproduction and fertility of life	The opening of the flower symbolises the reproduction of life, the many seeds of the gourd symbolise the abundance of children, and the frog's ability to reproduce symbolises female fertility.	Fertility cult
Phoenix, loong, tiger, etc.	Awe and worship of the mysterious forces of nature and the desire for a better life	The phoenix symbolises good luck and happiness; the loong symbolises dignity and strength; the tiger symbolises courage and strength	Totem worship

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

5.1.2.3 Longzhou Zhuang brocade colours: the emotion and semantics of symbols

Through the emotional and semantic analysis of Zhuang brocade colours, we have deeply explored the rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings carried by colours in Zhuang brocade. As an indispensable symbolic element in Zhuang brocade, colour not only beautifies the appearance of the brocade, but also conveys the Zhuang people's desire and pursuit of a better life.

First of all, the hues of red, black, and white, frequently seen in Zhuang textiles, embody distinctive emotions and meanings. Red denotes vitality and flourishing, symbolizing the Zhuang community's aspirations for auspicious occasions, celebrations, and joy; black radiates a sense of stability and enigma, echoing the introverted and composed dispositions of the Zhuang people; white signifies purity and grace, reflecting the esteemed quest of the Zhuang for a higher quality of life. The ingenious utilization of these hues not only enhances the visual appeal of the textiles but also enriches their cultural significance.

Secondly, the color schemes in Zhuang textiles exhibit uniqueness. Traditionally skilled in dyeing with natural plant-based dyes, the Zhuang transform ordinary cotton, linen, and silk threads into vibrant hues. Employing dyes derived from plants like indigo, turmeric, and cypress, they create lively shades of blue, yellow, red, and black, which are not just eco-friendly but also exude a natural charm. In terms of color coordination, the Zhuang excel in utilizing bold hues, primarily blue, black, red, and green, complemented by other shades to forge striking contrasts, thereby accentuating the theme and rustic style. This approach to color harmonization not only boosts the visual impact of the textiles but also underscores the Zhuang's exceptional craftsmanship and distinctive sense of aesthetics.

Lastly, the colors in Zhuang textiles encompass profound cultural implications. The emergence of motifs like the red phoenix, red sun, and other patterns not only injects dynamism and a festive spirit into the textiles but also signifies the Zhuang community's quest for happiness and good fortune. The incorporation of yellow elements like flowers and sun rays conveys warmth, hope, and the essence of harvest. The portrayal of blue clouds, blue rivers, and other natural vistas evokes a serene and expansive ambiance, representing the Zhuang people's reverence for nature and their thirst for exploration. The amalgamation of these hues and motifs gives rise to the vibrant cultural significance and symbolism inherent in Zhuang textiles.

As shown in Table 9, this table comprehensively shows the common colours and their symbolic meanings in Zhuang brocade, the common patterns and ways of combining them, as well as the natural raw materials used for dyeing and weaving these colours.

Table 9 Common colours, symbolism, matching methods and dyeing materials of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Colour	Symbolism	Patterns and Matching	Dyeing materials
Red	Symbolising vitality and prosperity, representing good fortune, festivity and vitality	Red phoenix, red sun, red flowers and so on. Often paired with yellow, blue, green and other colours to form a sharp contrast and enhance the visual effect.	Natural plant dyes such as cypress and sumac
Black	Symbolises stability and mystery, reflecting an introverted and calm character trait	Often appear as a base or secondary colour, with white, red, blue and other colours, highlighting the theme and rugged style.	Plants such as holly leaves and sebifer leaves
White	Symbol of purity and elegance, representing the noble pursuit of a better life	It is often used as a base colour, contrasting with black, red, blue and other colours to create a simple but elegant artistic effect.	Natural white cotton thread, no dyeing required
Yellow	Symbolising light, hope and harvest, expressing warmth and vibrant imagery	It is often used to depict natural elements such as the sun and flowers, such as yellow sun rays and yellow flowers.	Turmeric, Gardenia, Tulip and other natural plant dyes
Blue	Symbolising serenity, depth and dignity, embodying reverence and exploration of nature	Commonly used to depict natural scenes such as clouds and rivers, such as blue clouds and blue rivers.	Indigotoxin extracted from the leaves of <i>Magnolia officinalis</i>
Green	Symbolising vitality and growth, representing the vibrancy of all things natural	It is often used to depict natural landscapes such as foliage, grass, etc., and contrasts with blue, yellow and other colours to form a vivid picture of nature.	Natural plant dyes such as leaves and green grass

Source: Luo Yongteng (2024)

5.1.3 Social functions of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Through an in-depth study of the social functions of Zhuang brocade, this section reveals the multiple roles and far-reaching impacts that brocade plays in the Zhuang society. Zhuang brocade is not only a practical item in the daily life of Zhuang people, but also an important carrier for carrying and transmitting national culture, identity, educational wisdom and emotional connection.

In terms of education and inheritance, the traditional textile artform has passed down the weaving skills and cultural traditions from generation to generation through oral and heartfelt instruction. This not only fosters practical abilities among the younger generation but also imparts essential values like diligence, persistence, and coexistence. Such educational practices have subtly influenced the worldview, life perspective, and values of the local ethnic group, thereby establishing a firm basis for their continued growth and advancement.

When it comes to cultural identity, this unique textile, characterized by its distinctive designs and color schemes, has reinforced the ethnic consciousness and cultural identity of the indigenous population. Patterns representing nature worship, fertility rites, or totemic reverence all reflect a profound respect for nature, life, and ancestors, thereby enhancing the distinctiveness and diversity of their culture.

In life rituals, this textile serves as a treasured gift during significant occasions like births, full moons, weddings, and funerals. These events not only mark milestones in an individual's journey but also facilitate community cohesion, emotional exchange, and cultural dissemination. By exchanging these textiles, community members strengthen their emotional bonds and collectively strive for harmony and stability within their society.

As evident from Table 10, it provides a clear overview of the social functions associated with this textile and categorizes them, aiding in a deeper comprehension and analysis of its pivotal role within the local ethnic society.

Table 10 Social function categories and specific descriptions of Zhuang brocades

Social function	Specific functions	Descriptions
	Skill Transfer Education	The Zhuang brocade weaving technique is passed down within the family or community through oral and hand-to-hand teaching, covering the transmission of profound knowledge from material selection, pattern design

An educational legacy		to colour matching.
	Life and values education	The process of making Zhuang brocade teaches patience, care and perseverance, and the moral concepts and life philosophy embedded in the motifs help people learn in practice how to behave and how to live in harmony with nature and society.
Cultural identity and reinforcement	Strengthening community awareness	The rich patterns and motifs in Zhuang brocade, such as myths and legends, animal worship, etc., embody the unique cultural traditions of the Zhuang people and strengthen their sense of community and cultural identity.
	National Identity Symbol	As an important carrier of Zhuang culture, Zhuang brocade has become a symbol of national identity confirmation and pride.
The Gift of the Liturgy of Life	Gifts in the Nativity Ceremony	As a precious gift, Zhuang brocade is given to newborns as swaddling clothes in birth ceremonies, signifying good fortune and blessings.
	Gifts from the Full Moon Ceremony	The Zhuang brocade carrier is presented to the newborn by the grandmother during the full moon ceremony, symbolising the blessing and care for the child's growth.
	Wedding ceremony favours	The Zhuang brocade costumes and quilts are given to newlyweds as dowry, signifying good luck and happiness.

	Offerings in funeral ceremonies	The Zhuang brocade is used as an offering in funeral ceremonies to express condolences for the deceased and to appease the soul.
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Source: Luo Yingteng (2024)

5.1.4 Inheritance crisis and strategy of Longzhou Zhuang brocade

Through an in-depth analysis of the current situation of the development of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills and the challenges it faces, this study reveals the severe crisis that brocade weaving skills face in the process of modernisation and proposes corresponding coping strategies.

It is found that Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique, as an intangible cultural heritage of Longzhou area in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, has profound historical and cultural value and unique artistic charm. However, with the acceleration of modernisation and the impact of foreign cultures, the inheritance and development of brocade weaving skills are facing many challenges. The drastic reduction in the number of weavers, the aging of key skill masters and the low social recognition of the weavers are the main problems faced at present. These problems not only affect the inheritance of brocade weaving skills, but also restrict the development of local cultural industries.

To address these challenges, this study proposes several strategies. Firstly, it is recommended to set up majors related to Zhuang brocade skills in vocational colleges and universities to cultivate more young weavers through diversified enrolment and deepening school-enterprise cooperation. Second, modern apprenticeship and skills re-education should be implemented to enhance the skill level and market adaptability of existing weavers through ‘master-apprentice’ and short-term training programmes. In addition, education on cultural self-confidence and value identity should be strengthened to increase the social recognition of brocade weaving skills, and its influence should be expanded through media publicity and market promotion.

As in Table 11, this table corresponds the crisis, causes and corresponding strategies one by one, which shows more clearly the problems faced by Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving skills and the corresponding solutions, and through the implementation of these strategies, the inheritance and development of brocade weaving skills can be effectively promoted.

Table 11 Crisis, causes and corresponding strategies of Zhuang brocade inheritance

crisis	Description of the cause	Counterpart strategy
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Significant reduction in the number of weavers	Economic structure shift, brocade market demand decreased, economic benefits declined	Setting up majors in vocational colleges and universities related to Zhuang brocade techniques, diversifying enrolment, deepening school-enterprise cooperation, and providing students with internship and employment opportunities.
	Changes in family structure and diversification of choices for the younger generation	Implementing the modern apprenticeship system, combining the traditional master-apprentice system with the modern vocational education system, and carrying out activities to promote the brocade culture on campus, so as to stimulate students' interest in brocade skills
	Lack of interest in brocade weaving among the younger generation	Strengthen education on cultural confidence and value identity, and tell the cultural stories and historical significance behind brocade weaving
Ageing of key skill holders	The brocade weaving technique is a long and difficult learning curve, making it difficult to attract young people.	Providing scholarships and bursaries to alleviate the financial burden of students learning the art of brocade weaving, and organising brocade weaving competitions to provide a platform for young people to showcase their talents
	Weavers with key skills are getting older, with a high risk of inheritance breakdowns	Establishment of archives of brocade weaving technique inheritors, protection and inheritance guidance for the older generation of weavers
	Lack of social reputation and insufficient media coverage and educational support	Strengthening co-operation with the media, raising social awareness by reporting on the glamour and value of brocade weaving techniques, and producing promotional films and documentaries to show the production

Low social recognition of weavers		process and the stories behind brocade weaving techniques
	Weavers' low income and low social status	Formulate a plan to multiply incomes, improve the economic treatment of weavers, promote the marketisation of brocade products, expand sales channels and improve economic efficiency.
	Lack of effective marketing channels	Using e-commerce platforms and social media for brand promotion to attract more consumers to brocade products

Source: Luo Yonteng (2024)

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Discussion on the History of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade

5.2.1.1 Conclusion Overview

This study systematically reveals the detailed historical context of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship from its origin to its revival by integrating historical documents, archaeological discoveries and the research results of many scholars. The study found that the evolution of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship not only reflects the technological progress and changes in artistic style, but also deeply reflects the changes in social culture and the inheritance of national culture. It sprouted in the Warring States Period. With the exchange of Central Plains culture and the spread of technology, it gradually developed in the Qin and Han Dynasties, and reached maturity and widespread dissemination in the Tang and Song Dynasties. It finally reached its peak in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and became one of the treasures of the Chinese nation's textile art. However, the impact of modern industrialization and modernization once made it faces a crisis of inheritance, but with the joint efforts of the government and all sectors of society, the Zhuang brocade craftsmanship has been revived and revitalized.

5.2.1.2 Comparison and analysis with existing studies

Compared with Qin (2021), Qin Zichen's study in "Research on the History and Modern Development of Guangxi Zhuang Brocade" divides the history of Zhuang brocade into stages such as origin, initial development, maturity, heyday, decline and revival. This study is consistent with its basic framework, but has been deepened in

details. For example, in the origin stage, this study not only emphasizes that the ancestors of the Zhuang nationality in the Warring States Period used natural fibers such as hemp for weaving activities, but also further explores the importance of the natural foundation of Guangxi as a hemp crop production area to the rise of brocade craftsmanship. In the heyday stage, this study not only confirms the status of Zhuang brocade as one of the "Four Famous Brocades", but also deeply analyze its wide application in social life, such as clothing, dowry, etc., and how these applications have profoundly affected the living customs and cultural heritage of the Zhuang people.

Compared with Fan Zhidao (2021), Fan Zhidao's "Zhuang Brocade Craftsmanship and Heritage" provides a detailed periodization of the historical evolution of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship, from early germination to technical accumulation, skill maturity, heyday, and then to modern dilemma and modern revival. On this basis, this study pays more attention to the social and cultural background behind the evolution of skills. For example, in the stage of technology accumulation, this study not only points out the trend of diversification of brocade patterns and colors from the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties, but also explores how the exchange and integration of Central Plains culture and Zhuang culture during this period promoted the improvement of brocade weaving skills. In the stage of mature skills, this study further analyze the key role of the complex loom structure in the Tang and Song Dynasties in achieving exquisite patterns and rich colors.

Compared with Lu Qiong (2017), Lu Qiong's research focused on the origin and development of Zhuang brocade, emphasizing the important nodes in the evolution of its skills. In comparison with it, this study pays special attention to the role of regional characteristics in shaping Zhuang brocade skills. For example, this study elaborates on how the natural resources in the Zhuang-inhabited areas provide rich raw materials for brocade weaving skills, and how these resources affect the unique style of Zhuang brocade. At the same time, from the perspective of social and cultural changes, this study also deeply analyzes the social aesthetic concepts and cultural environment reflected by the changes in Zhuang brocade patterns and colors in different historical periods.

Compared with Nong Wenjun (2018), Nong Wenjun analyzed the cultural connotation of Jingxi Zhuang Brocade from the perspective of symbolic anthropology in "Research on Jingxi Zhuang Brocade Culture under the Perspective of Symbolic Anthropology". In comparison with it, this study highlights the particularity of Jingxi Zhuang Brocade as an important part of Zhuang brocade, and explores its cultural inheritance and changes in local society. This study also further analyzes the challenges and adaptation strategies faced by Jingxi Zhuang Brocade in the changes

of modern society, providing more abundant cases for understanding the inheritance and development of the entire Zhuang brocade craft.

Compared with Xu Xin (2016), Xu Xin's "Research on Traditional Textile Crafts and Culture of the Zhuang Nationality" outlines the evolution of Zhuang textile crafts from the overall development of textile crafts. On this basis, this study focuses more on the historical evolution of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship, especially its artistic style and technological progress in different historical periods. Through comparison, this study finds that Xu Xin's discussion on textile tools and technological progress and the discussion on the evolution of Zhuang brocade craftsmanship in this study are mutually confirmed, and together show the long development process of Zhuang textile craftsmanship from primitive simplicity to complexity and exquisiteness.

5.2.1.3 Reasons, limitations and future prospects

Possible reasons and explanations for these similarities and differences. The historical evolution of the traditional textile craftsmanship is jointly influenced by multiple factors. First, the abundance of natural resources provides a material basis for the emergence of textile craftsmanship; second, the dissemination of mainland culture and technical exchanges facilitate the rapid advancement of this ethnic textile craft; third, the flourishing of social culture and shifts in aesthetic preferences foster diversity in the designs and hues of the textile; finally, the support and patronage of the government and various sectors play a pivotal role in preserving and revitalizing this unique craftsmanship.

This study primarily relies on existing literature and archaeological discoveries to trace the history of this ethnic textile, which may introduce a certain degree of subjectivity and limited perspective. Additionally, due to the scattered and incomplete nature of historical records, the specifics of certain historical periods may not be fully recoverable. Future research should continue to delve into pertinent historical documents and adopt a multidisciplinary approach to more comprehensively unveil the historical reality of this ethnic textile.

In summary, as an important part of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation, the historical evolution process of Longzhou Zhuang brocade is full of richness and diversity. This study systematically combined the complete historical context of Zhuang brocade from its origin to its revival by comprehensively analyzing the research results and literature of multiple scholars, and revealed its technological progress, cultural heritage and social impact in different historical periods. Although this study has certain limitations, it provides useful references and inspirations for future related research.

5.2.2 Discussion on the Symbols and Social Functions of Zhuang Brocade

5.2.2.1 Conclusion Overview

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the pattern symbols of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, revealing its rich cultural connotations and symbolic meanings. Geometric patterns such as checkered patterns, diamond patterns, and circular patterns reflect the Zhuang people's pursuit of order, harmony, and perfection; plant patterns such as octagonal patterns and chrysanthemum patterns express the yearning for natural harmony and a better life; mythological and animal patterns such as dragon patterns and phoenix patterns show totem worship and nature worship; Chinese character patterns such as "Fu" and "Shou" convey the meaning of auspiciousness and happiness. In terms of color, red symbolizes vitality and prosperity, black represents stability and mystery, and white represents purity and elegance. Each color carries a profound cultural implication.

Zhuang brocade has multiple social functions in Zhuang society. First, in terms of educational inheritance, brocade skills are passed down from generation to generation through oral transmission, which not only cultivates the practical ability of the younger generation, but also conveys core values such as diligence and tenacity. Second, in terms of cultural identity, brocade strengthens the ethnic consciousness and cultural identity of the Zhuang people. In addition, in life rituals, brocade, as a precious gift, runs through important ceremonies such as birth, full moon, weddings and funerals, deepening emotional connections and maintaining community harmony.

5.2.2.2 Comparison and analysis with existing literature

Su (2024) mainly discussed the inheritance and innovation of Zhuang brocade patterns in "A Review of Research on Zhuang Brocade Patterns from the Perspective of Inheritance and Innovation", Highlighting the prominent role of the ethnic textiles of the Zhuang people, recognized as a valuable intangible cultural heritage, and their harmonious integration into modern designs, this exploration aligns with previous research and delves into the symbolic representations and inherent meanings embedded in the ethnic textiles of Longzhou from a semiotic perspective. This methodology aims to enhance our understanding of the cultural significance encoded within the patterns of these textiles. Specifically, our study not only confirms the diverse range of patterns observed in these textiles, as mentioned by Su, but also provides insightful analysis of the distinct symbolic interpretations of patterns such as checkerboards, dragons, and phoenixes. Furthermore, it explores how these patterns reflect the aesthetic ideologies and cultural beliefs of the Zhuang community. Additionally, this study offers a supplementary emotional and semantic examination of the colors employed in these textiles, thereby complementing Su's research and showcasing the unique charm of these textiles within the realm of visual arts.

In their comprehensive study on the cultural value and functional shifts of Guangxi ethnic textiles, Wang Jianjun and Mo Wenbin (2015) uncovered the economic, cultural, and religious significance of these textiles within the Zhuang society. Through field investigations and historical document analysis, they also

observed the gradual diminution of their traditional functions in the process of modernization. Our study echoes the research findings of Wang Jianjun and his colleagues, emphasizing the pivotal position of these textiles within the culture. However, the distinction lies in our study's stronger focus on the cultural connotations and social functions of the textile symbols. Utilizing semiotic theory and Geertz's cultural symbol theory framework, we delve deeper into the cultural significance and societal role inherent in the patterns of these textiles. Simultaneously, our study also sheds light on the revival of these textiles in modern society and explores novel pathways for cultural inheritance and innovation, thereby complementing Wang Jianjun's research on their functional shifts.

In "Ethnic Textiles as Gifts: Social and Life History Changes", Liao (2023) highlighted the prominent role of these textiles in traditional society and their evolving life history as gifts. Our study resonates strongly with Liao's conclusions, acknowledging the multifaceted roles played by these textiles within the Zhuang society, particularly as cherished gifts in life rituals. Our study further elucidates the specific role and significance of these textiles in various life rituals, such as birth, full moon celebrations, weddings, and funerals, illustrating how they serve as emotional bonds, fostering community harmony. Additionally, through semiotic analysis, our study unveils how the patterns and colors of these textiles align with these ritual occasions, conveying auspicious messages like prosperity and joy, thereby deepening and expanding upon Liao's research findings.

In "National Cultural Symbolization and Cultural Ecological Space Construction - Illustrated by the Example of Ethnic Textiles", Fan Wen and Wang Wen (2011) employed semiotic and anthropological theories to examine the emergence, dissemination, and recognition of ethnic textiles as emblems of national culture. This investigation aligns with their findings while highlighting the significance of these textiles, particularly focusing on the intricate symbol types and meanings present in Longzhou's ethnic textiles. These include geometric motifs, floral designs, mythical and animal figures, as well as Chinese characters, revealing the intricate and varied nature of the symbol system within these textiles. Furthermore, this study explores the multifaceted social roles played by these textiles, such as in educational transmission, cultural identity, and as gifts in life rituals, thereby offering empirical evidence of their profound influence as markers of national culture.

Ning (2010) delved into the evolution of ethnic textiles from being a traditional craft to being widely recognized as a cultural icon in "Ethnic Textiles: Forging and Modern Representation of a Cultural Symbol". Our study resonates with Ning's findings and reinforces the notion that ethnic textiles hold significant value in contemporary society as national cultural symbols. Through a semiotic lens, this investigation goes further to illustrate how various symbols within Longzhou's ethnic textiles communicate the distinct allure of the local culture via visual imagery and

symbolic interpretations. Additionally, this study considers the preservation and advancement of these textiles in the face of modernization, examining avenues for them to retain their traditional essence while adapting to contemporary demands and trends, thereby complementing and expanding upon Ning's research. In their study on the cultural structure and function of Dong embroidery in Liping, Guizhou, Yang Wen and Li Wen (2024) explored in depth the importance of embroidery as a carrier of national culture in national identity, religious beliefs, and social communication. Similar to this study, the authors also adopted ethnographic and cultural anthropological research methods, and through meticulous cultural analysis and field investigations, revealed the profound cultural heritage behind ethnic minority handicrafts. This study echoes the research of Yang Wen and Li Wen in terms of methodology, and also attaches importance to the value of field investigations and oral history interviews in understanding ethnic handicraft culture. However, this study focuses on the brocade of the Zhuang people in Longzhou, Guangxi, and deeply analyzes its patterns, colors and symbolic meanings from a semiotic perspective, and further discusses the multiple roles of brocade in social functions, including educational inheritance, cultural identity, and life rituals, which provides a richer perspective for understanding the cultural connotations of different ethnic handicrafts.

In his article titled "Functional Attributes and Cultural Significance of Geometric Motifs in Ethnic Textiles", Cao Shuai (2017) undertook a comprehensive examination of the geometric motifs present in these textiles. He delved into their formal attributes, cultural underpinnings, and their adaptability in terms of ornamentation, symbolism, and aesthetics. Extending from this, our study offers a more expansive symbolic analysis, encompassing not just geometric motifs but also exploring diverse symbol types like floral motifs, mythical and animal motifs, as well as Chinese character motifs. This reveals the intricate and varied nature of the symbol system inherent in Longzhou's ethnic textiles. Furthermore, by integrating Geertz's theory of cultural symbols, this study delves deeper into the cultural significance and societal roles embedded within these symbols, thereby presenting a more holistic viewpoint on the profound influence of these textiles as emblems of national culture.

Lu's (2017) investigation into animal motifs in ethnic textiles primarily focused on their formation, evolution, and cultural significance. He emphasized the symbolic importance of these motifs in areas such as totem worship, nature reverence, and fertility rites. Our study aligns with his findings on animal motifs but broadens the analytical scope to encompass the entire textile symbol system, discussing it in conjunction with specific societal functions. Through this comparative approach, our study not only validates Lu's assertions on the cultural significance of animal motifs but also underscores the pervasive and profound impact of ethnic textiles as vehicles of national culture. This is achieved through an in-depth examination of the textiles' role in educational transmission, cultural identity formation, and life rituals.

While scholars like Qin Zichen (2021), Fan Zhidao (2021), Lu Qiong (2017), Nong Wenjun (2018), and Xu Xin (2016) may not have directly addressed the specific content of our study, their research outputs provide a rich historical, cultural, and technical backdrop. These studies typically categorize the historical progression of ethnic textiles into phases such as origin, development, prosperity, decline, and revival, highlighting their societal and cultural relevance across different eras. Drawing from this wealth of research, our study further refines the symbolic expressions and societal roles of ethnic textiles within various historical contexts. This is achieved through detailed semiotic analysis and an examination of social functions, offering a more nuanced and specific understanding. Simultaneously, our study also shines a light on the challenges and opportunities faced by these textiles in contemporary society, paving the way for new perspectives and practical measures in preserving and promoting this intangible cultural heritage.

5.2.2.3 Reasons, limitations and future prospects

The reasons why Zhuang brocade has rich symbolic meanings and social functions can be attributed to the following aspects: First, in their long-term production and life, the Zhuang people have formed unique aesthetic concepts and cultural expressions through their observation and understanding of nature; second, as a material cultural heritage, Zhuang brocade carries profound historical memories and national emotions, and has become an important carrier for conveying culture and identifying identity; third, the inheritance mechanism within the Zhuang community has enabled the brocade weaving skills and cultural significance to continue and develop.

This study is mainly based on existing literature and field survey data, and has certain limitations. First, the data collection may be incomplete, and the Zhuang brocade culture and symbolic meanings of some areas are not fully covered; second, due to time and resource constraints, the depth and breadth of the field survey need to be improved; finally, the interpretation of symbols and social functions may be subjective, and further verification and supplementation through multidisciplinary cross-disciplinary research is needed.

Future research can be carried out from the following aspects: first, strengthen comparative research on Zhuang brocade in different regions to explore its regional cultural differences and commonalities; second, use modern scientific and technological means, such as digital technology, to conduct quantitative analysis of brocade patterns and colors to improve the objectivity and accuracy of research; third, strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation, combine sociology, anthropology, psychology and other multidisciplinary perspectives, and deeply analyze the social functions and psychological effects of brocade culture; fourth, pay attention to the inheritance and innovation of brocade skills, and explore how to maintain and carry forward the unique charm of Zhuang brocade culture in the context of modernization.

This study reveals the important position and role of brocade in Zhuang culture by deeply analyzing the symbolic meaning and social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade. Zhuang brocade is not only a practical object and artistic expression, but also a carrier of cultural heritage, identity and emotional connection. Through comparison and analysis with existing literature, this study provides a new perspective and empirical support for understanding the uniqueness and universality of Zhuang brocade culture. However, the study also has certain limitations, which needs to be continuously improved and expanded through more extensive and in-depth investigations and multidisciplinary cross-studies in the future.

5.2.3 Discussion on the countermeasures to the crisis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade inheritance

It is found that there are problems in the inheritance of brocade weaving technique, such as the decrease in the number of weavers, the aging of key skill masters, and the low social recognition of brocade weaving technique. In view of these problems, this paper proposes a strategy to incorporate brocade weaving technique into the vocational education system, including the establishment of relevant specialties, the implementation of modern apprenticeship system, deepening the cooperation between schools and enterprises, strengthening the education of cultural self-confidence and value identity, as well as strengthening the publicity and promotion and economic incentives, etc., in order to enhance the level of the skills and social acceptance, to attract more young people to participate in the inheritance, and to achieve a win-win situation for the protection of the skills and the development of the economy.

The drastic reduction in the number of weavers, the aging of key skill masters, and the low social recognition of weavers are the current manifestations of the talent fault crisis in the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique. This result is both the same and different from the studies of Fan (2019) and Gao et al. (2017), in which they also pointed out that the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique has problems such as a decrease in the number of inheritors, the disinterest of young people, and the low social status of weavers. However, this study found a difference from them through specific data analysis, which is that the key skill masters are decreasing and aging severely, and this issue is a unique finding of this study.

Economic structural transformation has had a profound impact on the market demand for brocade weaving technique. With the acceleration of modern industrialization, mechanized production gradually replaced traditional handicrafts, leading to a decline in the economic benefits of brocade weaving, and many weavers chose to go out to work as a result, a finding that echoes Wang's (2022) analysis of the decline in the economic benefits of traditional handicrafts.

Changes in family structure likewise had a significant impact on skill transmission. The finding that the younger generation is more inclined to choose modernized, high-yield occupations and lacks interest in traditional crafts that are more time-consuming and less financially rewarding supports Gao, H., Chen, B., & Jiang, Y. (2017).

The population of weavers with key skills, such as "warp-drawing" (threading) techniques, is aging. Similar to Fan's (2019) emphasis on the aging population of skilled weavers and the decline in the number of young practitioners, this study finds that this consistency reinforces the notion that traditional crafts are struggling to attract and retain younger generations. The loss of skilled artisans is a common problem for many traditional crafts, and the complexity of the skill itself and the long learning cycle are not negligible factors. The brocade weaving technique requires a long period of learning and practicing, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of transmission for young people in the modern fast-paced life. This finding echoes Qian and Huang's (2013) findings on the shortcomings in the ICH education system.

The low social recognition and support for weavers is similar to the observations of Lu (2019) and Wang (2022), who noted that social appreciation and economic incentives are crucial for the sustainability of traditional crafts. The low recognition and support in Longzhou highlights the need for targeted awareness campaigns and policy interventions to improve the status of brocade weavers.

This study proposes specific strategies for integrating brocade weaving into the vocational education system, including the establishment of relevant specialties, the implementation of the modern apprenticeship system, and the strengthening of school-enterprise cooperation. These strategies not only draw on previous research results, such as the "order-type training" and "master studio system" proposed by Ye and Jia (2011), but also combine the actual situation of Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique to propose more innovative solutions. The solution is more innovative. The establishment of the relevant specialization aims to cultivate a new generation of inheritors through a systematic and structured curriculum, a strategy that not only helps to improve the professional skills of the weavers, but also strengthens their cultural identity and sense of pride in the brocade weaving technique.

The implementation of the modern apprenticeship system draws on the essence of the traditional master-apprentice system, combines the advantages of modern vocational education, and ensures the effective transmission of key skills by means of "master-apprentice". This model has been effective in the inheritance of Tujia brocade weaving technique in western Hunan (Gao et al., 2017), and this study further explores the potential of its application in Zhuang brocade weaving technique in Longzhou. Strengthening school-enterprise cooperation not only enhances students' practical skills and market adaptability, but also promotes the in-depth integration of the skills with the market, providing strong support for the industrialization of

brocade weaving technique. The implementation of this strategy can help to break the geographical limitation of the inheritance of the skills and realize the wide dissemination and innovative development of the skills.

Vocational education and training, this study builds on Gao, Chen, & Jiang's (2017) research on the role of vocational education in preserving traditional crafts. The strategies proposed, such as integrating brocade weaving technique into vocational school curricula and promoting modern apprenticeship models, are consistent with the recommendations of these scholars. The findings suggest that vocational education can play a key role in bridging the talent gap, although implementation challenges remain.

In summary, from the point of view of the research concept, comparing with the predecessors, the predecessors have made many achievements in brocade weaving technique, cultural inheritance and vocational education, but there are relatively few specialized researches for this place of Longzhou, and even fewer researches from the aspect of the specific role of vocational education in the inheritance of the skills and the path of implementation, so their researches lack of systematicity and comprehensiveness, and they can't combine the inheritance of the brocade weaving technique and the innovation of vocational education. Therefore, their research lacks systematic and comprehensive, and cannot closely integrate the inheritance of brocade weaving technique with the innovation of vocational education.

The innovative nature of this study is targeted and comprehensive in the use of research concepts. This study is the first time that the concept of vocational education is used to study Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving, which has strong regionality and relevance, and can provide specific guidance for local skills inheritance. It is also the first time that this study combines the concepts of talent crisis and vocational education to analyze and guide traditional skills inheritance, local economic development and vocational education innovation, which forms a systematic and comprehensive research paradigm and conceptual framework.

Limitations of this study, the sample size of this study, although diverse, is relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, our focus on the Longzhou Zhuang brocade weaving technique means that the findings may not be directly applicable to other traditional crafts. Future research should involve larger sample sizes and explore different cultural contexts to validate and extend these findings.

5.3 Suggestions

5.3.1 Suggestions on the use of research results

(1) Integration of academic research and education. It is recommended to incorporate the research results into the teaching system of relevant disciplines as

academic research cases to help students deeply understand the cultural connotations and social functions of Zhuang brocade and cultivate their interdisciplinary research capabilities.

(2) Reference for policy formulation. When formulating policies for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, the government and relevant departments can refer to the analysis and response strategies of the crisis of brocade weaving skills inheritance in the research results to provide a scientific basis for policy formulation.

(3) Development of cultural tourism projects. Utilize the content of the history and culture of Longzhou Zhuang brocade in the research results to develop cultural tourism projects with local characteristics, promote local economic development, and enhance the public's awareness and interest in Zhuang culture.

(4) Product design and marketing. Apply the research results to the design innovation and marketing of Zhuang brocade products, combine modern aesthetics with market demand, and develop brocade products that retain traditional charm and conform to modern lifestyles.

(5) Community development and cultural inheritance. Encourage and support the establishment of a brocade skills inheritance mechanism within the community, and enhance the cultural identity and pride of community residents through holding skills training courses, cultural festivals and other activities, and promote the living inheritance of brocade skills.

(6) Media publicity and cultural popularization. Use a variety of media platforms to widely publicize the cultural value and social significance of Zhuang brocade, improve public awareness of it, and enhance cultural protection awareness.

(7) International cooperation and exchanges. Strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the international academic community in the field of intangible cultural heritage protection, share research results, learn from international advanced experience, and jointly promote the protection and inheritance of Zhuang brocade culture.

(8) Establish digital archives. Establish a digital archive of Zhuang brocade, including digital records and preservation of brocade patterns, craft processes, oral history, etc., to provide valuable information for future academic research and cultural inheritance.

(9) Encourage social capital participation. Through policy guidance and market mechanisms, encourage social capital to invest in the protection and inheritance of Zhuang brocade, such as setting up special funds and attracting corporate sponsorship, to form a diversified protection pattern with the participation of government, market, and society.

5.3.2 Suggestions for future researchers

In future research, researchers can deepen and expand on the rich and unique cultural heritage of Longzhou Zhuang brocade from the following aspects in order to reveal its cultural value and social function more comprehensively and deeply.

(1) Deepening of cross-regional comparative research. Future research should strengthen cross-regional comparative research on Zhuang brocade in different regions. By collecting and analyzing samples of Zhuang brocade from different regions in Guangxi and even across the country, we can compare their similarities and differences in pattern design, color application, craftsmanship characteristics, and cultural connotations. This cross-regional comparison can not only reveal the impact of regional cultural differences on brocade art, but also explore the common characteristics of Zhuang brocade under different cultural backgrounds, providing a broader perspective for a comprehensive understanding of Zhuang brocade culture.

(2) Application of modern scientific and technological means. With the development of science and technology, researchers should make full use of modern scientific and technological means such as digital technology, image processing, and artificial intelligence to conduct in-depth analysis of Longzhou Zhuang brocade. Through quantitative analysis of brocade patterns, statistics of color distribution, and simulation of weaving techniques, we can reveal patterns and features that are difficult to discover using traditional methods. At the same time, these technical means can also provide strong support for the preservation, reproduction, and dissemination of brocade.

(3) Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation. Promote cross-disciplinary research in sociology, anthropology, psychology, art, and other disciplines, and examine the cultural significance and social function of Longzhou Zhuang brocade from different perspectives. Through multidisciplinary comprehensive analysis, we can more comprehensively reveal the role and value of brocade in Zhuang society, as well as its inheritance and development trends in modern society.

(4) Exploration of skill inheritance and innovation. Focus on the inheritance and innovation of brocade skills, and study how to maintain and carry forward the unique charm of Zhuang brocade culture in the context of modernization. On the one hand, we will deeply explore and organize traditional skills to ensure their inheritance; on the other hand, we will explore the application of new skills, new materials, and new designs in brocade to promote the innovative development of brocade culture.

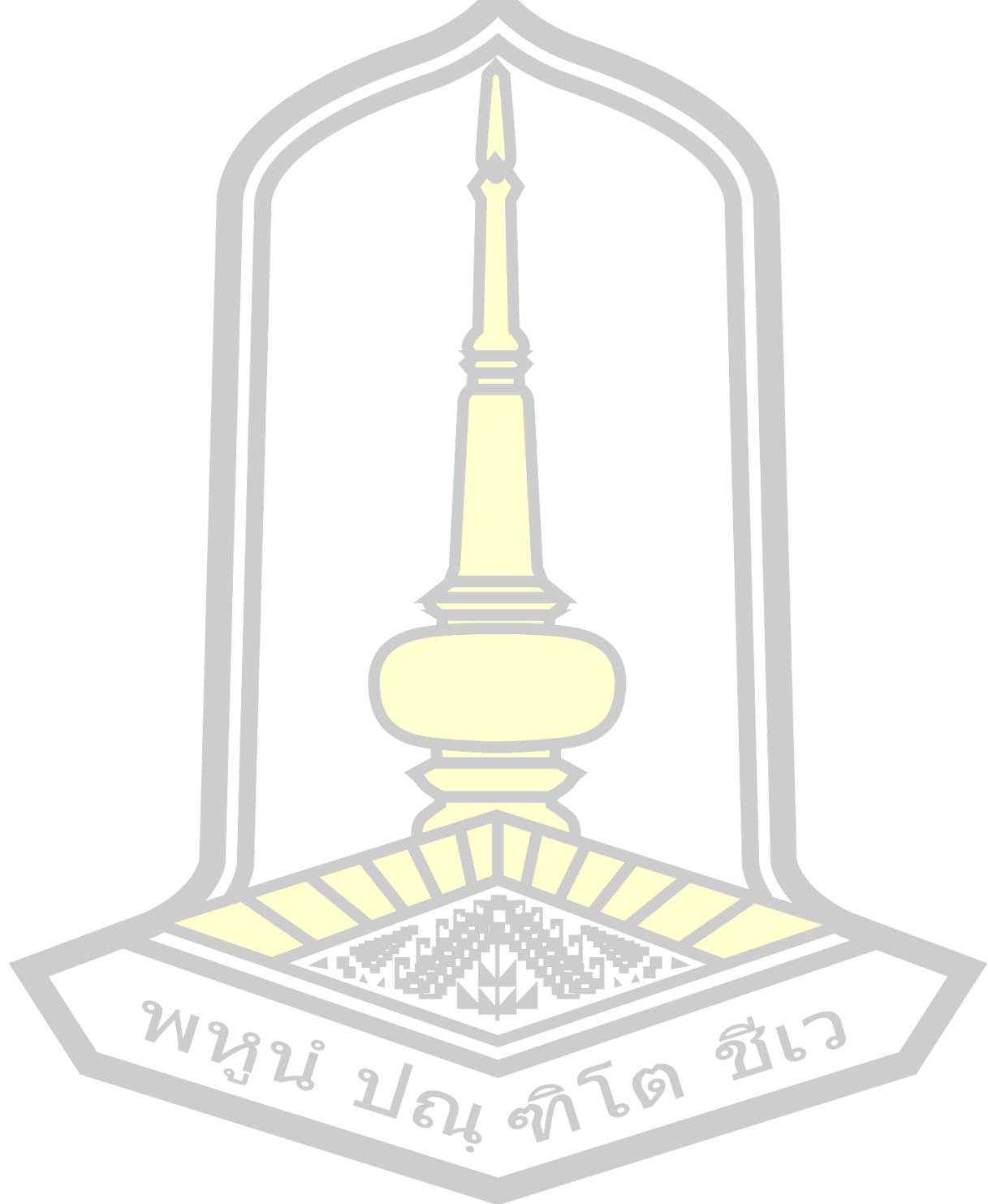
(5) In-depth field investigation and strengthening of oral history research. Field investigation is an important way to understand the brocade culture of Longzhou Zhuang. Future research should continue to go deep into the front line and obtain first-hand information through long-term and meticulous field work. At the same time, strengthen the oral history record of brocade inheritors and dig out more folk stories

and legends about brocade skills, cultural connotations and social functions. These oral history materials will provide valuable historical memory and cultural resources for the inheritance and development of brocade culture.

(6) Expansion of industrialization and marketization paths. Study how to promote the industrialization and marketization of Longzhou Zhuang brocade, and explore the positioning and promotion strategies of brocade products in the modern market. Through innovative design and marketing strategies, improve the market competitiveness of brocade products and promote the realization of the economic value of brocade culture. At the same time, pay attention to changes in market demand and guide brocade production to develop in a diversified and personalized direction.



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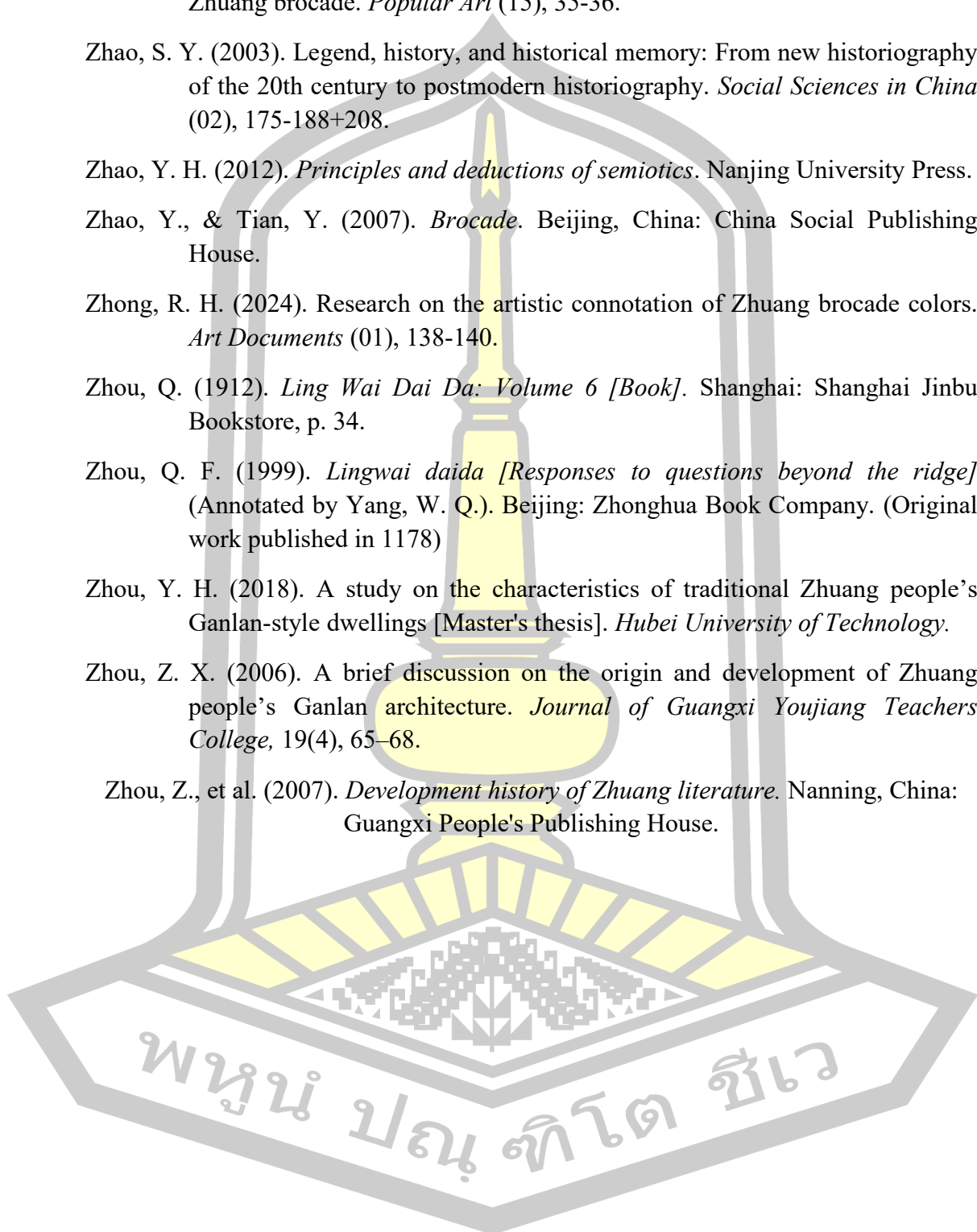
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APPENDIX A

Key Informants

Title: Longzhou Zhuang Brocade: symbol, function and inheritance

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Time:

Role:

Place:

1. What is the origin and development of Longzhou Zhuang Brocade?
2. What role has Zhuang Brocade played in the long river of history? What profound impact has it had on the local society?
4. In what aspects do you think the historical value of Zhuang Brocade is reflected?
5. What are the decorative symbols in Zhuang Brocade? What cultural connotations do they each carry?
6. How do these decorative symbols reflect the wisdom and aesthetics of the Zhuang people?
7. What do you think is the value and significance of these symbols in modern society?
8. What important social functions does Zhuang Brocade have in the local society?
9. Faced with the impact of modernization, what crises has Zhuang Brocade encountered? What are the reasons?
10. What measures have the government and academia taken to protect and inherit Zhuang Brocade? What are the results?
11. How do you think we should better promote the inheritance and development of Zhuang Brocade culture in the future?

พหุ ม ประ โท ชี เว

Casual Informants

Title: Longzhou Zhuang Brocade: symbol, function and inheritance

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Time:

Role:

Place:

1. What are the unique features of Zhuang brocade? How is it different from other brocades?
2. What are the key process steps and technical difficulties in the production of Zhuang brocade?
3. Can you share your learning and practical experience in Zhuang brocade craftsmanship?
4. How do you think Zhuang brocade craftsmanship should be inherited and developed in the future?
5. What are the commonly used colors in Zhuang brocade? What emotions or semantics do they represent?
6. How are these colors matched and used in Zhuang brocade?
7. What impact do you think the use of colors has on the overall beauty of Zhuang brocade?
8. Does color also reflect certain emotions or values of the Zhuang people?
9. What major crises and challenges do you think Zhuang brocade is currently facing?
10. What impact do these crises have on the production and sales of Zhuang brocade?
11. How do you or your team deal with these crises? What successful experiences or lessons have you learned?
12. How do you think the inheritance and protection of Zhuang brocade skills should be strengthened?

General Informant

Title: Longzhou Zhuang Brocade: symbol, function and inheritance

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Occupation:

Time:

Role:

Place:

1. What do you know about Longzhou Zhuang Brocade? How did you get in touch with Zhuang Brocade culture?
2. Have you experienced Zhuang Brocade culture in your daily life or travel? How do you feel about it?
3. What do you think are the unique features of Zhuang Brocade culture? What deep impressions does it leave on you?
4. What do you think of the colors in Zhuang Brocade? Which colors have left a deep impression on you?
5. How do you think these colors reflect the aesthetics and emotions of the Zhuang people?
6. In your aesthetic concept, what are the unique features of the color matching of Zhuang Brocade?
7. What role do you think Zhuang Brocade plays in the local society? What social functions does it have?
8. Is Zhuang Brocade used in your daily life? If so, how is it used?
9. Do you think Zhuang Brocade culture is still valuable in modern society? Why?
10. What are your expectations and suggestions for the future development and inheritance of Zhuang Brocade culture?

พหุ ม ประ โท ชี เว

Fieldwork Observation Scale

Title: Longzhou Zhuang Brocade: symbol, function and inheritance

Survey location: _____ Survey date: _____ Weather conditions: _____

I. Environmental observation

Overall environment of the village:

Natural environment (describe the terrain, vegetation, water source, etc.): _____

Village layout (describe the arrangement of houses, road layout, etc.): _____

Workshop location: _____

Indoor facilities of the studio (describe the number of looms, dye storage, work surface, etc.): _____

Lighting and ventilation conditions in the studio: _____

II. Personnel observation

Basic information of weavers:

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Years of experience in brocade weaving: _____

Current weaving Brocade stage (such as spinning, dyeing, weaving, etc.): _____

Weaver operation proficiency evaluation (primary/intermediate/advanced): _____

Are there any special skills to be demonstrated (such as warp pulling, complex pattern design, etc.): _____

Inheritor lineage (record the name and relationship of the main inheritor): _____

Inheritor's current work status and main activities: _____

III. Observation of skill inheritance

Inheritance channels (family inheritance, master-apprentice inheritance, school inheritance, etc.): _____

Are there any regular training or teaching activities at present: _____

Apprentice learning cycle: _____

Main difficulties encountered during the learning process and solutions: _____

IV. Observation of social and economic conditions

Family economic conditions: _____

Main source of income (brocade sales, farming, working outside, etc.): _____

Brocade sales (sales channels, prices, market demand, etc.): _____

Is there any economic or policy support from the government or community: _____

Local publicity and promotion of brocade skills: _____

V. Observation of culture and symbols

Brocade patterns and symbols: _____

The main patterns and symbolic meanings of the brocade currently woven: _____

Are there any new patterns or innovative designs: _____

In which important ceremonies (such as weddings, funerals, festivals, etc.) are brocades used and their significance: _____

Are there any special rituals or customs related to brocade weaving: _____

VI. Interaction and feedback

Communication with weavers: _____

Weavers' attitudes and views on brocade weaving skills: _____

Weavers' views and suggestions on the inheritance of skills: _____

Feedback from community residents: _____

Community residents' cognition and attitude towards brocade weaving skills: _____

Is there a younger generation interested in brocade weaving skills and participating in learning: _____

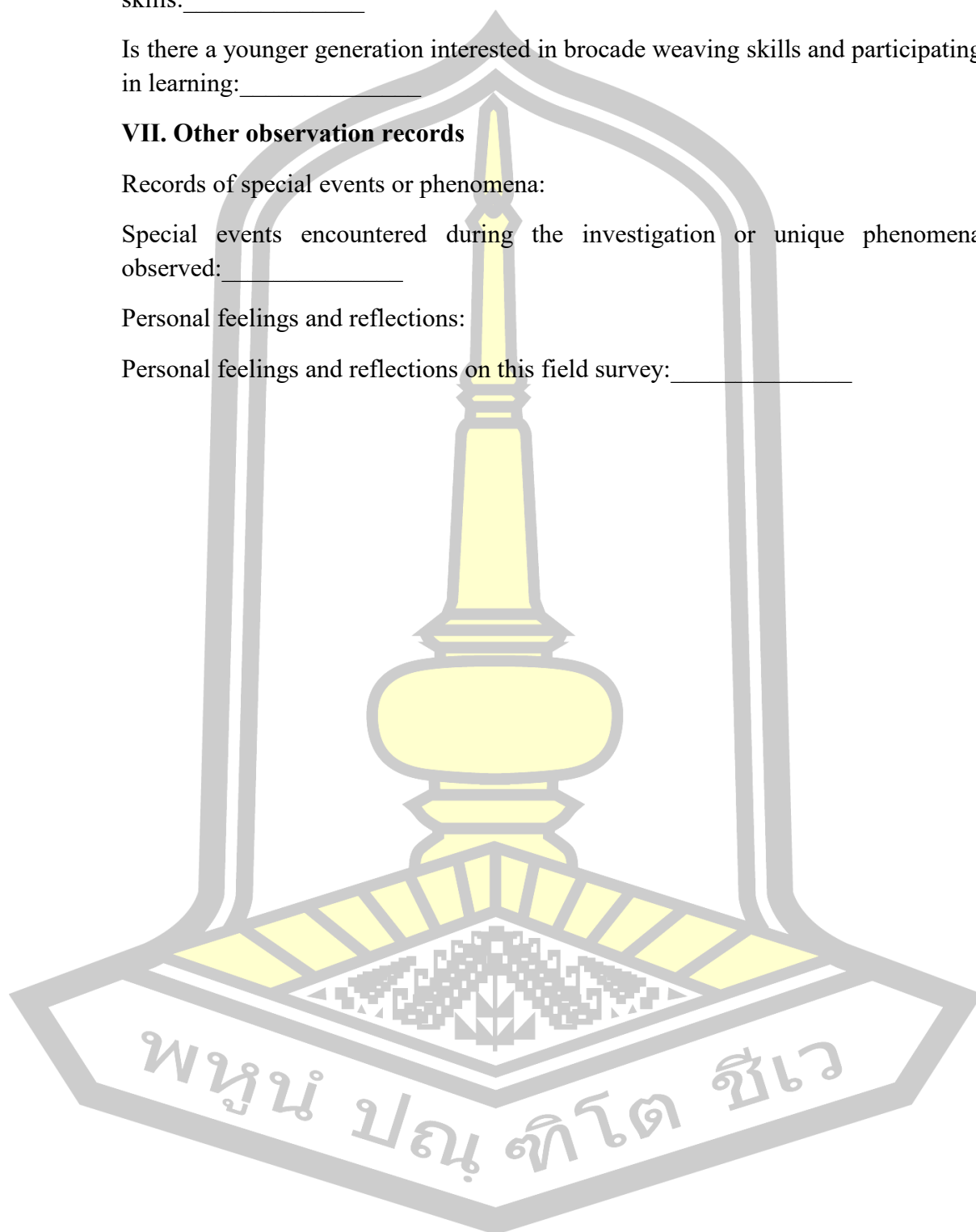
VII. Other observation records

Records of special events or phenomena:

Special events encountered during the investigation or unique phenomena observed: _____

Personal feelings and reflections:

Personal feelings and reflections on this field survey: _____



APPENDIX B

List of interviewees

Key Informants

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong RQ is the interviewee, and the interview location is Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 12, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Lan Sheng is the interviewee, and the interview location is Nanning City, Guangxi. The interview time is April 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Lu Wenqing is the interviewee, and the interview location is Laibin City, Guangxi. The interview time is May 8, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li SH is the interviewee, and the interview location is Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong XW is the interviewee, and the interview location is Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Lu Shichu is the interviewee, and the interview location is Laibin City, Guangxi. The interview time is May 8, 2024.

Casual Informants

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Suying is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 16, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Chunlan is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 16, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Cuihua is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 16, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Xiaofang is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 16, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Guixiang is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 17, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Lihua is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 17, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Sumei is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 18, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Yuzhen is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 18, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Wenjuan is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 18, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Xiulan is the interviewee, and the interview location is the Xingfu Home Community in Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is January 18, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Xiuyun is the interviewee, and the interview took place in the Xingfuyuan Community, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview took place on January 18, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Jinfeng is the interviewee, and the interview took place in the Xingfuyuan Community, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview took place on January 18, 2024.

General Informant

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Xiaohua is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 1, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Lifen is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 1, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Minghui is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 1, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Limei is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 1, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Guoqiang is the interviewee, and the interview location is Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 2, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Dongmei is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 2, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Xiaoting is the interviewee, and the interview location is Banchitun, Jinlong Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 2, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Xiuzhen is the interviewee, and the interview location is Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Zhiming is the interviewee, and the interview location is Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Hongying is the interviewee, and the interview location is Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview time is May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Zhifang is the interviewee, and the interview location is Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Guixiang is the interviewee, and the interview took place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Yulan is the interviewee, and the interview took place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Xiaoxia is the interviewee, and the interview took place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 3, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Xiuqin is the interviewee, and the interview took place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 4, 2024.

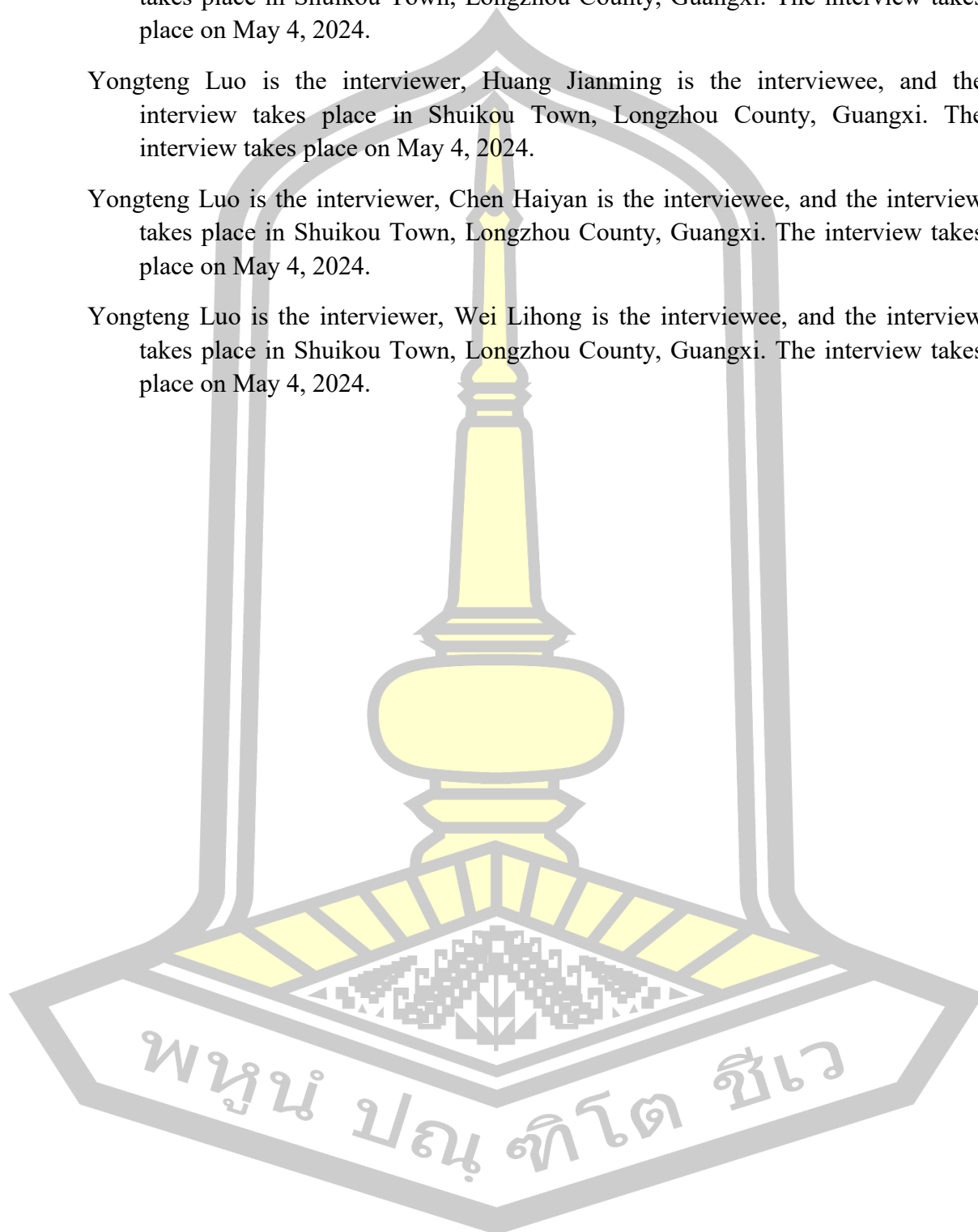
Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Li Wanjun is the interviewee, and the interview took place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview was conducted on May 4, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Nong Huifang is the interviewee, and the interview takes place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview takes place on May 4, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Huang Jianming is the interviewee, and the interview takes place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview takes place on May 4, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Chen Haiyan is the interviewee, and the interview takes place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview takes place on May 4, 2024.

Yongteng Luo is the interviewer, Wei Lihong is the interviewee, and the interview takes place in Shuikou Town, Longzhou County, Guangxi. The interview takes place on May 4, 2024.



Key Informants

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	NongRQ	male	Folklore expert, former tourism official	73
2	Lansheng	male	PhD, Lecturer	34
3	LuWenqing	male	PhD, Professor	57
4	Lee S.H.	male	Main officials of the cultural department of Longzhou County Government	31
5	Agricultural	female	Official from the Cultural Department of Longzhou County Government	52
6	Lu Shichu	male	PhD, Professor	49

Casual Informants

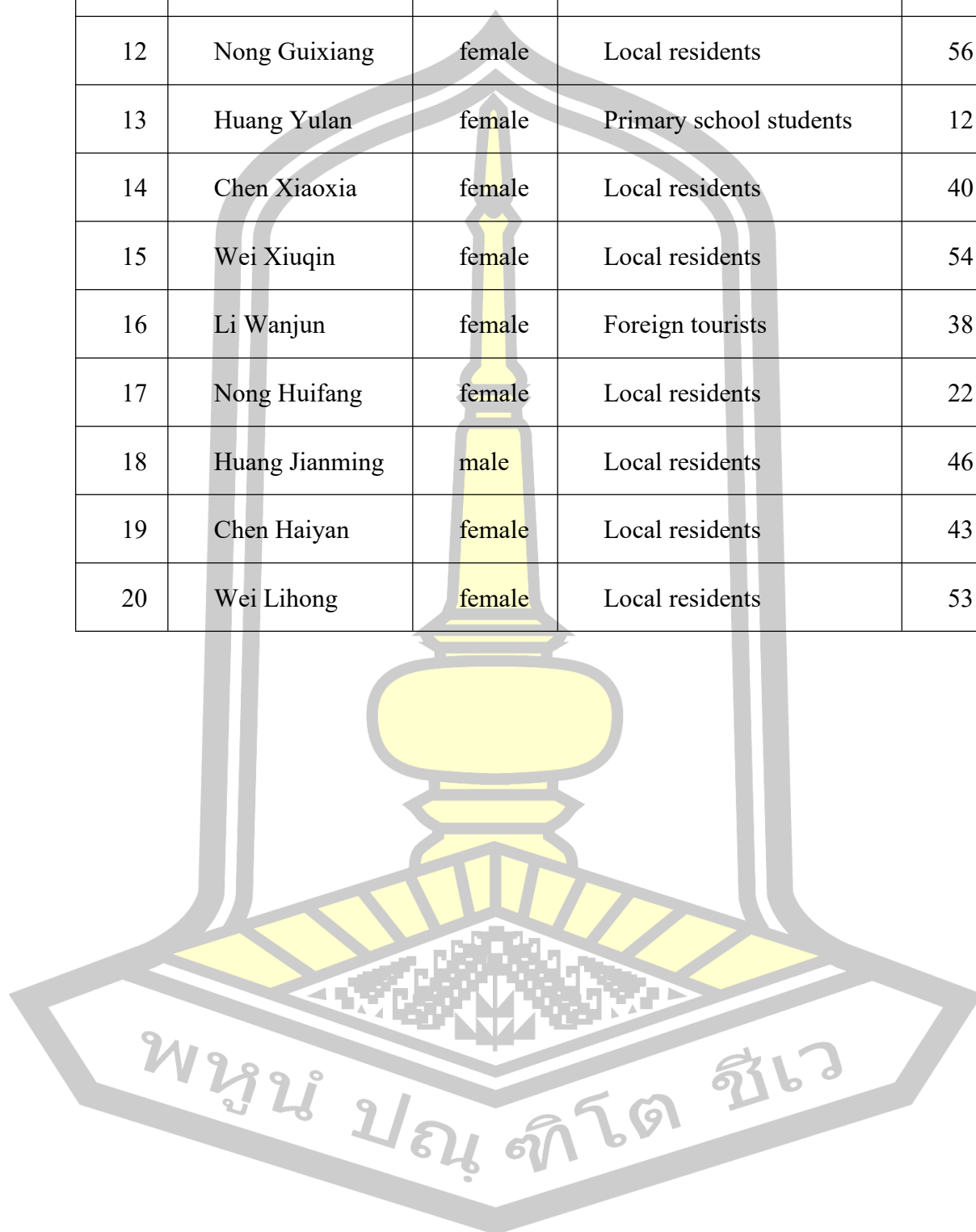
No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Li Suying	female	Head of Zhuang Brocade Production Workshop and Zhuang Brocade Inheritor	51
2	Nong Chunlan	female	Weaver	50
3	Huang Cuihua	female	Weaver	38
4	Chen Xiaofang	female	Weaver	43
5	Wei Guixiang	female	Weaver	62

6	Li Lihua	female	Weaver	32
7	Nong Sumei	female	Weaver	35
8	HuangYuzhen	female	Weaver	56
9	ChenWenjuan	female	Weaver	40
10	Wei Xiulan	female	Weaver	55
11	Li Xiuyun	female	Weaver	34
12	NongJinfeng	female	Weaver	29

General Informant

No.	Name	Gender	Role	Age
1	Li Xiaohua	female	Local villagers	42
2	Nong Lifen	female	Visitors	45
3	HuangMinghui	male	Local school students	17
4	Chen Limei	female	consumer	30
5	Wei Guoqiang	male	Brocade Culture Lovers	50
6	Li Dongmei	female	College Students	19
7	Nong Xiaoting	female	Local craft shop owner	28
8	Huang Xiuzhen	female	Local residents	48
9	Chen Zhiming	male	Local residents	52
10	Wei Hongying	female	Local residents	60

11	Li Zhifang	female	Local residents	35
12	Nong Guixiang	female	Local residents	56
13	Huang Yulan	female	Primary school students	12
14	Chen Xiaoxia	female	Local residents	40
15	Wei Xiuqin	female	Local residents	54
16	Li Wanjun	female	Foreign tourists	38
17	Nong Huifang	female	Local residents	22
18	Huang Jianming	male	Local residents	46
19	Chen Haiyan	female	Local residents	43
20	Wei Lihong	female	Local residents	53



BIOGRAPHY

NAME Yongteng Luo

DATE OF BIRTH January 8, 1993

PLACE OF BIRTH Mashan County, Guangxi, China

ADDRESS Tanli Village, Zhoulu Town, Mashan County, Guangxi, China

POSITION Lecture

PLACE OF WORK Laibin, Guangxi

EDUCATION 2011.09-2015.06 Studied undergraduate in Guangxi University for Nationalities.
2015.09-2018.06 Studied in Guangxi University for Nationalities as a graduate student.

