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**A FRAMEWORK OF CULTURE-BASED INNOVATION
FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGES FOR DESIGN
WITH FOCUS ON YANCHUAN PATCHWORK**

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School of Design

A Framework of Culture-Based Innovation for the
Protection and Development of Intangible Cultural
Heritages for Design with Focus on with Yanchuan
Patchwork

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 2018

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates a group of Chinese folk artists and establishes a framework of culture-based innovation to protect and develop their works by deeply understanding the local cultural customs and the art philosophy of these artists.

After comparing different art forms in Shaanxi Province, patchwork was chosen as the main research object because of its rich history and unique form of expression. Patchwork is a popular art form in many Western countries, and it can also be found in some small counties in Northwest China with a completely different appearance. In those small Chinese counties, patchwork is one type of traditional Chinese folk art and a form of intangible culture heritage that combines the skills of both paper cutting and embroidery. It is worth noting that this kind of beautiful folk art is now disappearing due to a lack of interest by young people. In this research, we will investigate the deep meanings of the Gao family patchworks from Yanchuan County and demonstrate their relevance to new design technologies. The patchworks of Gao's family are highly imaginative, fully reflect the local folk customs, and demonstrate a master level of hand-making skills.

This research shows that the denotations of Yanchuan Patchworks are much more than what is external shown. Thus, the different meanings of each symbol may provide new inspirations for modern designers of different area.

To establish a deep understanding of Yanchuan Patchwork, some qualitative research methods have been used; field studies of art anthropology with interviews and observations, symbolic analysis and experiments with culture-based innovation methods via 3D printing technology have been conducted. To establish a framework for culture-based innovation, a theoretical structure will be presented logically from a literature review to the research methods. This framework was organized into 3 sections. The first section is about people: the lifestyle of patchwork artists, the process of creating Yanchuan patchworks and how the artists impart their skills to the next generation are discussed. The second section is about symbolism: a collection of various symbols in Yanchuan patchwork and the denotations of these symbols based on traditional Chinese thinking are identified. The last section is about design innovation: experiments will show how to utilize the symbols from Yanchuan patchwork in graphic design, laser cutting design and 3D printing design. Through a generative process in which the elements in patchworks are reused to generate 3D designs, it can be demonstrated that the transformation from 2D graphic patterns on a patchwork to a 3D product has great implications for preserving this traditional art as well as for developing design skills with advanced design technologies. In this thesis, we will present several examples of 2D patchworks transformed into 3D products and will propose ways for coding a generative product design system that can make variations of these 3D products beyond the imagination of the original patchwork artists.

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE THESIS

Xue, B., & Tang, M. X. (2014). *A framework for culture-based design innovation for the protection and development of culture heritage*. Proceedings of ACTION! Doing Design Education DesignEd Asia Conference 2014, Hong Kong, 2-3 December, 2014.

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Xue, B., & Tang, M. X. (2016). *Culture-based Innovation through a Field study of Yanchuan Patchwork*. Proceedings of International Service Innovation Design Conference (ISIDC). Chiang Mai, Thailand. 1-3 November, 2016.

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The publications above are generated from the PhD study. Parts of the writings are included in this thesis that citations of sources are provided.

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June 2018, Hong Kong

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Because Western culture has a huge influence in many aspects of lives in Eastern culture. In particular, traditional Chinese folk arts and cultural heritage are gradually disappearing from daily life in China. With the rapid development of advanced technology, traditional objects are regarded as old-fashioned things (Ke Hongtu 2004). However, designers can gain inspiration from traditional cultural elements to design projects with a strong cultural basis and meanings beyond regional significance. (Chen Xiaoping 2009, 35-38) mentions that Chinese elements can be mainly found in utensils, fabric, buildings, religious and sacrificial tools, books, paintings and cultural objects. However, cultural significance is largely wasted or underused in design practice and design education. Because foreign cultures have already become very popular in the design community in China, especially in design schools, a large portion of students' design works after Western styles. (Pan Lusheng 1990) puts forth the perspective that, the revaluation and acknowledgement of folk arts are based on the impact of Western cultures and the regressive awareness of local cultures. Thus, an important topic for design research is the combination of modern design thinking with traditional art elements to attempt to incorporate these elements into daily life, as well as increasing

awareness to protect intangible culture heritage and reshape the artistic value of Chinese culture (Ke Hongtu 2004). It is crucial to appeal to the new generation of design students who will lead the future design, and to improve their awareness about protecting relevant cultural knowledge through feasible design innovation and exploration.

There are multiple motivations for conducting this research:

- 1) The primary goal is to discover the disappearing traditional handcrafts of Shaanxi Province, such as ‘Yanchuan Patchwork’, ‘Fengxiang Clay Sculpture’, and ‘Hua County Flower Steamed Bun’. The focus of this research is Shaanxi Province, it is a province is in northwest China and well known for the Terra-Cotta Warriors, Shaanxi Opera and traditional foods; however, people lack knowledge of the local folk arts of the region.
- 2) Another goal is to develop a framework for culture-based design innovation for the protection and development of Chinese intangible cultural heritage, the research approaches this goal through ethnographic observations of folk artists and design experiments that explore to what extent these arts can inspire contemporary designers. These traditional folk arts were derived from Chinese philosophy, mythology and religions throughout history; the elements of these works are varied but the sources for them are similar. These kinds of unique art expressions and forms have been inherited from very ancient times. Through a lengthy process, Chinese rural people have transformed abstract concepts into visual

images with their wisdom and imagination (Wang Ti 1996). The same process can inspire today's designers in their own transformational work.

- 3) Therefore, it is necessary to extract those cultural elements from intangible cultural heritage. (Hai Jun 2007) believes that the act of design is mainly a social behaviour and is always generated between at least two organisms. One part of design is to create symbols and give meaning to them; the other part is to accept and understand symbols and the kinds of meanings they already have. The act of abstraction involves both qualitative and quantitative research methods, in which samples of past designs are used as original data for abstracting contents, meanings, symbols, and contexts of social, cultural, functional and aesthetic significance. As such, what makes a cultural symbol worthy of abstraction involves cognitive and historical studies of the products and systems in the dynamic evolving economic and social conditions. For this, methodologies and strategies are important to make concrete contributions to the field of cultural and design studies.
- 4) Another motivation is that because of the complicated process of making original handicrafts, the number of people who have the knowledge and skills to do this work is rapidly decreasing. Although local governments continue to try to protect their local culture heritage with the legal system, they cannot keep up with the rate at which a huge number of crafts with significant values and diversified styles are disappearing. Thus, this

research plans to draw the attention of a young generation of designers from either China or other countries and to instil in them a passion to devote their efforts to protecting and preserving these kinds of aesthetical Chinese folk arts.

- 5) Finally, traditional folk arts can reflect national collective sense, attributes and psychological quality. They contain deep cultural and artistic thinking (Zhou Lu 2011). It is necessary to investigate how different historical periods contributed to a complete system of design evolution of these traditions through philosophical ideas, artistic thinking, technological innovation and lifestyles. To preserve the intangible cultural heritage in Shaanxi, we must conduct a historical knowledge investigation and promote these arts via new media or forms in the process of design innovation. Through this research, and by studying the rich cultural heritage of Shaanxi Province, relevant knowledge will be created that might help local artists increase their quality of life and inspire designers in their creation.

1.2 Research Questions & Assumptions

There are four main research questions that this research is set out to answer.

- What are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan Patchwork?

- How do folk artists improve their ways of imparting their skills to subsequent generations?
- How can contemporary designers properly cite the symbols of traditional Chinese handicrafts?
- How to increase the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation?

Before beginning this research, some assumptions have been noted based on the research questions. First, when people look at a piece of traditional Chinese folk-art, most of them may only see its beautiful surface. However, if they understood the denotation of each symbol included in the work, they may be interested in the tales of legends represented in the object, which could be a way to protect Chinese folk-art and spread understanding of it to others. Second, by recording the process and methods by which masters teach their skills to young people, education departments can teach more folk artists to use similar methods, which will spread the spirit of traditional culture to more educational fields. Third, if modern designers can understand the deep meanings of and stories included in folk-art and then follow up with folk artists to understand how they incorporate symbols in their works, they may be inspired by these works and use the relevant symbols more appropriately in their own design projects. Lastly, design is the artificial combination of natural objects based on different cultures, which is always mediated by a cultural form. The ever-changing forms of products can reflect the cultural

traits that comprise different factors (Xu Hengchun 2008). Therefore, design innovation may have some positive influence on the protection and development of traditional culture and Chinese intangible cultural heritages.

1.3 Research Approaches

This research is built on a deep understanding of the methods, significance and social values (practical value, artistic value and scientific value) of a specific type of folk art in Shaanxi Province, which is in the northwest part of China. The key objective is to establish a framework for culture-based design innovation by studying the masters of local folk arts, such as those artists in Shaanxi Province who make patchwork. This framework will integrate the knowledge related to the craftsmanship of patchwork, the aesthetic quality of patchwork, and the innovativeness of the unique skill. Designers will also gain inspiration and support from the study of patchwork with modern design thinking and technologies. (Chen Yuanchuan 2010) mentions that designers should understand and determine the cultural connotations of the original object when using traditional Chinese symbols for reference in a design project. Otherwise, the design works will become a surface that is seemingly attractive but of low meaning and quality. Based on this framework and the developed examples, both the connotations and denotations of the symbols in traditional Chinese folk arts and crafts for contemporary design education will also be explored to bridge the gap

between the folk artists of handicrafts in the vast counties of western China and the new generation of designers in China and other countries.

Nevertheless, the decreasing number of local artists is one of the limitations of this research. (Xiong Zhengyi 2007) noted that the most important issue of intangible cultural heritage is inheritance. Both the main part of inheritance and the ultimate goal of inheritance are human. The inheritors of an intangible cultural heritage as a national traditional culture are both creators and successors. The culture of various ethnic groups can only be inherited through oral instruction and rote memory. One urgent task is to establish a close connection with local craftspeople in order to understand their environment and situation to preserve folk arts from the source. This can be accomplished by establishing a friendly relationship with relevant artists and their families to investigate how they impart their skills to family members or how those artists impart their knowledge to young people. Determining what they need most and how to help them by observing their lifestyle and immediate environment is an important step.

As a methodological strategy, it is also necessary to be critical of those who ignore cultural identity in design or misinterpret the meanings of cultural values and standards. With the purpose of incorporating traditional Chinese cultural elements into international design objects, designers should not only be concerned with the surface but also with the deep semantic meaning of the artwork. To accomplish this, it would be useful to conduct data collection

from field studies and observation projects and to conduct data analysis of relevant art forms in a theoretical and systematic way. This work also requires relevant semiology knowledge along with the application of transformation methods, sound knowledge of the research objects and expert use of design software.



Figure 1-1. A Chinese style packages.

(<http://www.cdapex.com/home/newsdetail/1010>)

Normally, it is difficult to judge whether a design project is good or bad. In a critique, we can only determine reasonable and unreasonable points. Take the package design pictured in Figure 1.1 above as an example. Based on its surface, people can obtain information from the English words on the package and understand it is a package of Chinese food. The main colours are red and white, and these two colours are very representative colours in China. The shape of this package is an octagonal cylinder, which corresponds with the

Eight Diagrams of Ying and Yang. Some symbols can be found on the outside of package, such as a lantern, pagoda, mountain, sea wave and peach tree. These symbols are typical traditional Chinese symbols. Brush strokes can be found on the inside of the packages, and the designer made these strokes into a smiley pattern. In my personal opinion and combined with Chinese primitive philosophy, the colour and shape of this package are suitable. However, some of the symbols on the package do not relate to the food inside, and the connotation of these symbols differs greatly. To analyse these symbols in detail, the lantern symbols are usually used in the Lantern Festival, which represents the reunion of the entire family. Pagoda symbols are usually used in landscapes or temples. Mountain and wave symbols can also be found in landscapes and represent silence and motion, respectively. A peach tree and peach flowers are used to represent spring and romance. This package design was made by a foreign designer who may love Chinese culture but may not have known the exact meaning of the symbols used. Western design thinking needs to be modified to be more acceptable, which indicates that traditional Chinese thinking in creative processes might provide a positive option (Leong and Clark, 2003). Design theory could be enriched by referring to traditional Chinese cultural knowledge, such as Chinese Semiotics and Chinese Primitive Thinking. In practice, researchers can refer to methodologies from Art Anthropology, and designers could gain inspiration from traditional cultural knowledge when completing modern design projects.

The last approach of this research is to conduct tests and experiments from two dimensions to three dimensions through different design methods to record how to transfer traditional Chinese cultural elements into different types of design practices with the understanding of the framework mentioned above. These tests aim to share a type of design thinking that might become a kind of paradigm in design works though it might not be suitable for all the kinds of culture-based design innovations. After completing the research with the approaches outlined above, a generalization is needed to make conclusions that are generally applicable to other regions. In the last section, an evaluation will also be conducted with local artists in Shaanxi Province.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- Provide in-depth understanding of the methods, significance and social values (practical value, artistic value and scientific value) of Shaanxi's patchwork;
- Identify the inspirational value of cultural references for modern design that can be supported and demonstrated by modern design technology.
- Establish a theoretical framework that can support the preservation and development of Chinese intangible culture heritages and design

innovation. This framework might layout the research sequence fluently and logically with clarity.

1.5 Research Significance

The significance of this research is various. By establishing this research topic, some types of folk arts in Shaanxi Province have been found. We chose Shaanxi Province as our research area because it is the origin of the Yellow River civilization and the beginning of the silk road. This area is full of historically significant folk art, and some of which is already very famous throughout the world, such as Guanzhong Shadow Play, Fengxiang Clay Sculpture, Paper Cutting and Yaozhou Porcelain. In the context of this research, art is no longer an appendant of investigation, but the theme of it. People can understand the social networks and the essential significance of culture through the study of art (Fang Lili and Li Xiujian 2013). Therefore, we believe that Shaanxi Province is suitable for conducting relevant research because of its strong cultural identification.

Yanchuan Patchwork has been chosen as the main object of study due to its unique form and its cultural connotation. The master Gao Fenglian family has inherited Yanchuan Patchwork for three generations, and the family can be considered as a paradigm for protecting and inheriting this kind of folk art. In this study, in-depth analysis of folk art, such as Yanchuan Patchwork and Hua County Steamed Flower Bun have been presented. The contributions of this

analysis are twofold. First, it aims to explore the original forms of traditional Chinese folk arts, which is in remote mountain villages but hardly known elsewhere in the design world. Second, it may help designers explore the mysterious stories communicated through these works as a source for their design inspiration. In this study, the origin of Yanchuan Patchwork was traced through field research in Shaanxi Province. The meanings and underlying values of the examples collected are then analysed following a semiotic approach.

By observing how folk artists make these works and reviewing how these works could be used in modern designs, a possible framework for culture-based design innovation is proposed for further research and design. If the framework can be utilized in design education and innovation, the relevant cultural knowledge of Yanchuan Patchwork could be inherited and protected. This example could also be used as a paradigm for protecting and promoting the development of other types of cultural heritages through design thinking.

Through the experiments of transferring elements of Yanchuan Patchwork, which are based on traditional Chinese thinking, to new projects with design software, people may be inspired and discover a variety way to incorporate cultural elements in new design projects. (Xu Hengchun 2008) noted that the cultural connotation and taste of design is key to determining the quality of design. This process may become a way that transmits traditional symbols into future technologies.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

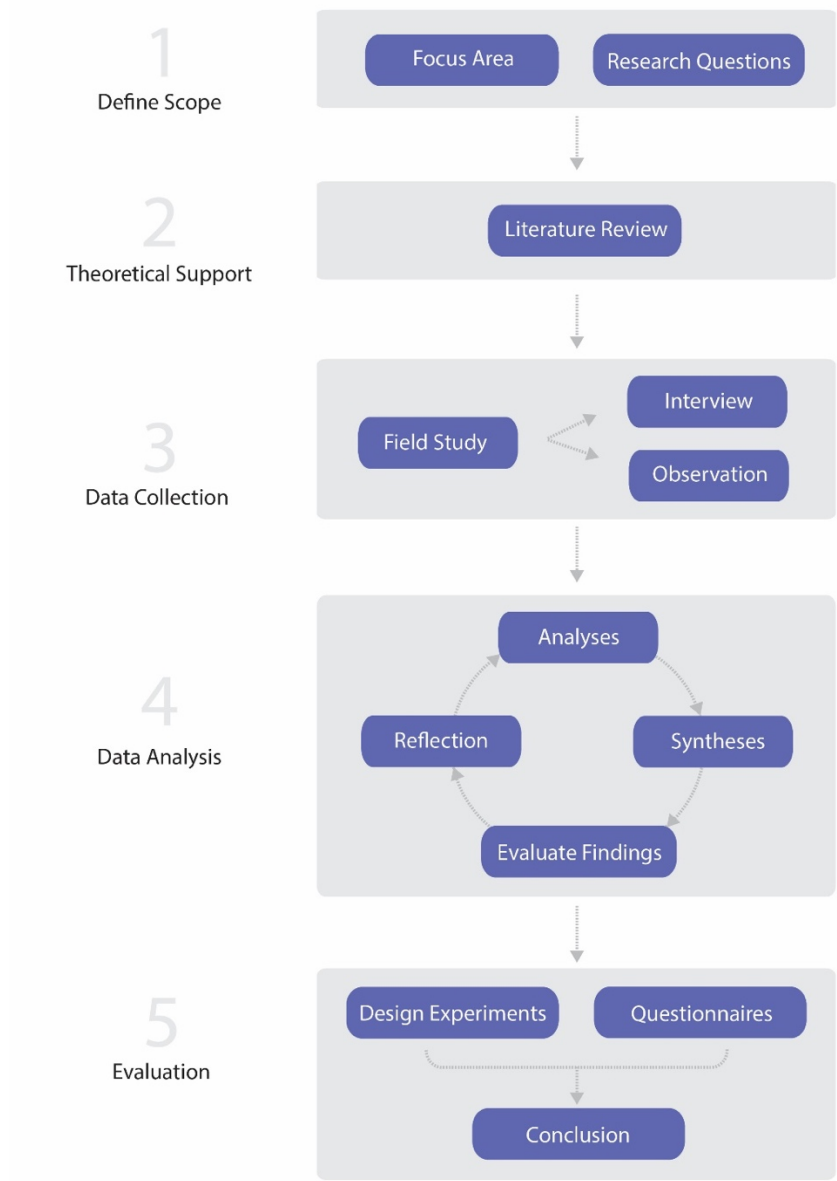
2.1 Introduction of the Research Framework

An important objective of the whole research is to establish a framework of culture-based design innovation, which can illustrate systematically steps on protecting and promoting Yanchuan Patchwork, the selected research methods therefore become a very important part. This chapter will mainly introduce what kinds of research methods have been selected in this doctoral research and the author's motivation for these methods. The framework below illustrates the entire progress of this study in five parts, which are closely related to the five chapters in this thesis. The research questions will also be reflected and explained according to the different kinds of research methods.

The nature of culture-based studies in design requires a combination of qualitative research methods and a deep understanding of relevant cultural knowledge, as well as the wisdom of masters who created their beautiful works with their minds and hands. In the view of this study, some of the methods employed by the author will be described in the coming sections, and some additional methods may also be necessary in the future. The background of this research project and its methodological contexts and research questions will be presented as well. To combine some of the quantitative research methods, the author has first confirmed the research

location in Yanchuan County, where the respondents are local patchwork artists and their family members. The research process will be based on a series of field studies and data analyses. Ethics concerning the copyright of these artists will be considered followed by the development of a data collection strategy.

Table 1. Research Methodology Framework.



2.2 Discussion of Methodological Considerations

2.2.1. Overview

The field study research methods are based on the theory of Art Anthropology, which consists of semi-structured interviews with a goal of understanding the information models abstracted from the patchworks by the artists, as well as relevant data collection conducted by taking photos, recording videos and recording sounds. A direct observation of the making and inheriting progress of folk art was conducted over a period of time. An analysis and decomposition of the information in patchwork was also conducted after data collection. This procedure was followed by experiments in both graphic design and 3D printing design and by evaluations targeted at collecting feedback and opinions of artists. Combined with all of these qualitative research methods, the relationship between artists and their families, artists and younger generations, and artists and society will emerge more clearly to audiences. This procedure is followed with detailed discussions of several methods that may contribute to the study. Reflecting on the application of design research methods to this thesis, at this stage, some field studies have been conducted based on the literature reviews. At the same time, some primary data have been collected. The details of each method above will be thoroughly explained in the following sections.

2.2.2. Study of Qualitative Research Theory

As culture and creative industries have become a new design trend over the last few years, to increase awareness of the need to protect intangible cultural heritages, designers from different fields have completed multiple experiments and inquiries to combine cultural and design methods. Sustainable innovation has been appealing to many designers, and, as a result, design thinking is now changing. New design works should not only be people-oriented but should also gradually convert into nature-based works, said (Li Leshan 2007). Li also mentioned that the main purpose of the designer is to determine what they cannot make for human subsistence lifestyle development and what kinds of existence and methods are suitable for sustainable development. Based only on these concepts, sustainable products can be designed to meet human survival and development. This research is based on qualitative research methods and aims to bridge the gap between artists and modern designers. In (Punch, K. 1998)'s words, qualitative research is an induction process from data to general topics and then to general-specific patterns or theories. The common way for researchers to conduct qualitative research would be as follows: first, collect detailed information from the participants; second, summarize the categories of themes according to this information; third, achieve general paradigms, theories or principles according to these categories or themes; and finally,

compare them with the personal experience or the existing literature of the subject.

(Creswell, J. W. 2011) has noted that qualitative research relies on text and image data. Qualitative research has unique data analysis methods and absorbs a variety of research strategies. The features of qualitative research methods have been summarized by (Rossman and Rallis 1998); in total, there are eight aspects. First, qualitative research is usually conducted in natural places; second, qualitative research uses a variety of interactive and humanist methods; third, qualitative research is naturally occurring rather than strictly predictable; fourth, qualitative research is essentially explanatory; fifth, qualitative researchers take a holistic observation of social phenomena; sixth, qualitative researchers conduct systematic thinking in the research process; they are sensitive to their personal biographies and to how they will build their studies; seventh, qualitative researchers use multifaceted, repetitive and synchronous complex reasoning; and finally, qualitative researchers adopt and use one or more research strategies as their guidelines for research steps. (Creswell, J. W. 2011) believes that the characteristics summarized by Rossman and Rallis not only adopt the traditional qualitative research perspective but also apply new defence tests as well as participatory and self-reflection perspectives. The following part of this chapter will elaborate each method that the author has used in this research. In this thesis, the author will also follow the eight features of qualitative research mentioned above to

establish a systematic research method system for the study of protecting and promoting the disappearing Chinese folk arts through culture-based design innovation.

2.2.3. Study of Art Anthropology

Art anthropology is a discipline that came from the West and was first introduced into China in the early 20th century. The study of art anthropology subsequently sprouted in China. (Fang Lili and Li Xiujian 2013) noted that art anthropology has a very important research perspective, that is, the study of people through conducting investigation between artists who engaged in art creation, artistes and various art groups. The nature of the studies within these art anthropological methods aim to develop the real living situation of a group of Yanchuan Patchwork artists, as well as the possibilities of how they could pass their skills to the next generation.

This doctoral dissertation is more focuses on the aspects of art anthropology but not design anthropology. There are some differences between art anthropology and design anthropology. (Magee and Siobhan 2013) mentioned that, few decades ago, anthropologists have already been involved in design works, until recent years, a new area of investigation has emerged which aims to integrate the advantages of design thinking and anthropological research. On the other hand, through analysis and synthesis under two positions by (Geng Han, 2017), it shows that design anthropology is not a

discipline construction, but an open and practical humanistic attitude and humanistic measures. Therefore, the research methods in this study were mostly based on the theory of art anthropology.

The field studies in this thesis were conducted based on a large road map, which has built a strong relationship with folk art masters and their families, with departments of local government, and with relevant researchers, and has led to the comparison of different kinds of folk arts. The qualitative research methods in this research aim to reveal the real living environment of the Yanchuan County and Yanchuan patchwork artists; therefore, this research is closely related to Art Anthropology theories. (Li Xiujian 2012) defines art anthropology as an interdisciplinary research field, which includes ethnic art, folk art and urban art. The main research methods include comparative study, field study and context study. Through field studies of deep investigation in the relevant places, the author has built a well-connected network between the Yanchuan patchwork artists and other people.

(Robert K. Yin 2014) has noted that as a research method, the case study can be applied in many conditions to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related conditions. No matter what the area of investigation is, the specialized need for case study surveys starts from the desire to understand complex social environments. The case study is going to be used when investigating some present events and also when the relevant behaviours cannot be controlled. The more your questions try to

interpret some contemporary phenomenon, the more the case study research will be related. This method is also more related the more your questions require a comprehensive and deep description of some sociological facts. Meanwhile, case study research is far from being only an exploratory strategy. (Ridder, H. G. 2012) Thus, the differences between the diversiform research methods and their benefits and drawbacks may require transcending the hierarchical stereotype.

2.3 Selected Research Methods

2.3.1. Data Collection

Data collection is a step toward applying a method within the entire process of case studies. This step includes observation, interviews, and literature research as well as the review of audio-visual materials. The research content could become more detailed, and the research results could become more specific through sufficient data collection. (Creswell, J. W. 2011) has defined that the process of data collection includes setting boundaries, collecting data through unstructured or semi-structured observations, interviewing, literature researching, imaging materials, and developing some memorandums for recording information. (Creswell, J. W. 2011) has also mentioned that, in the process of data collection, there are also some things that need attention. First, it is necessary to purposively choose a research place and research unity for the study; second, it is important to note the style of data collection or the

type of data; third, while discussing the form of data collection, researchers should analyse the advantages and limits in detail; and finally, except for the typical forms of data collection, observation and interviews, some special forms could attract readers' interest and may also collect some useful information that cannot be found through observation and interview methods. In the coming case studies, the author will make use of interviews and observations as the means of data collection.

2.3.1.1. Interview

In the case study section, some face-to-face semi-structured interviews have been conducted by the author with relevant folk artists and researchers. Conducting interviews with the craftspeople is for the sake of understanding their living environment and lifestyle deeply; conducting interviews with researchers aims to obtain useful suggestions and critical feedback on the study. All the interviews have been recorded by recording pen or mobile phone, some valuable interviews have then been transcript in Chinese and then into English. (Robert K. Yin 2014) has mentioned that how one asks a question in an interview or on a questionnaire can lead to different responses. Sometimes the response can be apposite and considerable, but sometimes the respondents cannot provide a suitable answer to the question. Therefore, the researchers have to design a complete framework of questions, according to the situation of the respondents and their own research needs. (Aroni, R. and

Minichiello, V. 2008) have noted that the researcher may gain access by establishing a trusting and close relationship with the interviewees. However, one should be careful of over-involvement or getting “too close”, as this might affect objectivity and might bring bias into the investigation. After finishing all the interviews, the author has conducted content analysis on the transcripts to find the relevant contents to the research questions.

As (Schuman, H. and Presser, S. 1981) mentioned, questions in an interview are never isolated but are a part of a series of questions. Thus, the context or sequence in which the questions appear can impact the results of the responses to the questions. In other words, choosing a part of a research can change the attitudes and behaviours of those being investigated. (Aroni, R. and Minichiello, V. 2008) have also mentioned that the structure of an interview is designed around a list of topics without settled wording or settled ordering of questions. In this research, the structure of the interview is carried out according to the introduction of artists, the living environment and the creative motivation of the artists. As (Webb, E. 1983) notes, interviewees have to be easy to access and be willing to answer the questions for the interview. Additionally, the questionnaire methods must be valid. It is normal to see this method being applied as part of a discovery study, where the researcher is trying to gain an understanding of the field of study and is trying to develop theories, not only test them, said (Aroni, R. and Minichiello, V. 2008).

2.3.1.2. Observation

For the case studies in this research, some observations have been conducted by the author. There are three kinds of observations: participant observation, reactive observation and unobtrusive observation. Participant observation is the foundation of cultural anthropology. This type of observation involves getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with your presence so that you can observe and record information about their lives, said (Bernard, H. R. 1995). Reactive observation may let researchers record what people want them to see, not the behaviour that goes on when researchers are not there. Unobtrusive observation is a strategy for studying people's behaviour without them knowing it. The methods for unobtrusive observation include behaviour trace studies, archival research, content analysis, disguised observation and naturalistic field experiments. The advantage of researchers being an observer as a participant is that they may record information according to what they have seen. However, they may also observe some unavailable personal information of researchers, as summarized by (Merriam, S. B. 1998).

The observation method of this study is reactive observation. Some of the observations were conducted with folk artists in Yanchuan during the field study period. Another observation was conducted in Nanjin, an intangible Chinese cultural heritage summer camp that the author had attended as a

student. This kind of observation is very direct; researchers can gain the information that they need in a short time period. However, the disadvantage was mentioned above; the people who have been observed may not demonstrate the true situation. In these instances, researchers will need to decide what is the appropriate information they need and what is not suitable for their research.

2.3.2. Data Analysis

To understand both the connotation and denotation of the Yanchuan Patchwork, some systematic data analysis is necessary. In this research, the author has analysed two representative patchworks of Gao Fenglian in detail, from the overall shape, symbols and meanings to colour matching aspects. In (Barnard, H. R. 1995)'s opinion, qualitative analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain the existence of those patterns. A few years later, (Bennett, A. and Elman, C. 2006) also insisted that the features of forms and styles could be imagined as structures, as well as a collection of all the elements that are systematically encoded and understood from the differences in encoding. The process of data analysis is actually a process of refining cognition from text and image data, as summarized by (Creswell, J. W. 2011). However, (Leavy, P. 2014) has mentioned that analysis can range from the factual to the conceptual to the interpretive. The purpose and

outcome of data analysis is to reveal to others through fresh insights of what we have observed and discovered about the human condition.

Case studies and ethnographic research involve a specific description of the site or individual, which are then followed by data analysis of topics or arguments, said (Stake, R. E. 1995). (Creswell, J. W. 2011) has summarized that the general steps of data analysis can be defined as follow: first, organize and prepare the data analysis; second, read the data and achieve a general sense of the information, reflecting on its overall significance; third, conduct a detailed analysis and coding; fourth, describe or explain in detail the place, human or event in the research; fifth, present the narrative and theme in the qualitative narrative; and finally, explain the interpretation or data or the meaning of the data. In chapter five below, two deep analyses have been conducted by the author according to the general steps of data analysis. The data analysis section is closely related to the data collection methods; almost all of the analysis data were based on the information and experiments collected through interview and observation.

2.4 Conclusion

In summary, to inspect if the selected research methods are appropriate for this research, all of the methods need to be closely related to the original research questions. The first research question of ‘What are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan

Patchwork?’ will be partly explained through data analysis. The author will interpret both the connotation and denotation of the symbols in two representative Yanchuan Patchworks of Gao Fenglian. Without the deep investigating and understanding of local culture and custom, the hidden meaning of those traditional symbols may not be discovered by researchers. The second research question of ‘How do the folk artists pass their skills to a new generation?’ will be verified through a reactive observation in an intangible Chinese cultural heritage summer camp in Nanjing. Although reactive observation may possess some defects in regard to the facticity, the author will try to achieve some of the skills of the selected Chinese folk arts as one of the participants. The third research question of ‘How can contemporary design properly cite the symbols of traditional Chinese handicrafts properly?’ will be reflected in the literature research and the experiment sections. This research question needs a systematic theory basis and some experimental supports. The last research question of ‘How do we improve the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritage through design innovation?’ will be interpreted through some questionnaires in the evaluation section following the design experiments. The questionnaire will be small in scale because of the limitations of the local environment and the short time period. However, the favourable aspect is that the outcomes are mostly positive. Therefore, the

selected research methods in this thesis will be suitable to address the research questions and to promote the progress of the entire research field.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to conduct relevant literature reviews to establish a systemic theory structure for the entire thesis. The main information covers four areas: the origin of Patchwork, studies of semiotics and philosophy; research on traditional symbols and aesthetics, and investigations on Chinese Semiotics in cultural-based design innovation. In this chapter, the author will identify the origins of Chinese folk art and Yanchuan Patchwork, as well as the relationship between patchwork and Chinese philosophy to determine the possibility of cultural-based design innovation through using the symbols in patchwork. The author has organized this literature review systematically, from surveys to in-depth studies and fully introduced the main information. The key words used when searching the literature were as follows Chinese folk arts, Chinese needlework, patchwork, semiotics, Chinese philosophy, Chinese primitivism philosophy and cultural-based design innovation. All the information sourced in this chapter was collected at libraries, such as the Pao Yue-kong Library and the Shaanxi Provincial Library, and through academic web sites, such as Google Scholar, Baidu Scholar and CNKI (Chinese National Knowledge Infrastructure).

3.2 The Origin of Patchwork

3.2.1. Brief introduction to Chinese folk art

Traditional Chinese folk art has nearly ten thousand years of history. (Zhang Daoyi 1998) states that half of the development of traditional Chinese art occurred spontaneously from primitive society and the other half was consciously developed as part of civil society. This phenomenon is rare in any country or nation because it is not only completely but also constituting its own system. The emergence of Chinese folk art was accompanied by the origin of Chinese civilization. It reflects the demand for life and the reproductive and mental awareness of nature worship of ancient nomadic peoples. The development of spiritual awareness enriched the imagery of primitive art to a significant extent, as defined by (Wei Liqun2002). (Xu Hengchun 2008) mentions that traditional Chinese handicrafts are used to combine specific cultural traditions and customs; therefore, it is close to people's habits of daily life and is easily accepted by people. However, one disadvantage is that traditional handicrafts are also closed and conservative. In (Pan Lusheng 1991)'s words, the creators of Chinese folk art are more eager to express their feelings and interests in their life and to govern their pursuit of formal beauty. He also noted that, compared with Western art, Chinese folk art does not require fidelity to natural objects, nor is it required to conform to the laws of perspective. Rather, Chinese folk art is intended to

involve creators and appreciators in the pursuit of beauty and to evoke the experience of the beauty of life while engaging in artistic creation or appreciating folk art works.



Figure 3-1. Traditional Chinese folk art: Tiger Pillow



Figure 3-2. Traditional Chinese folk art: Embroidered Shoes

(Lv Pintian 2015) noted that in the 20th Century, since the founding of New China, the modern form of Chinese art practice and theory is a product of mutual agitation between Chinese and Western cultures. The views and

methods from Europe and the United States have strongly impacted the national tradition of Chinese folk arts. In China, traditional folk-art skills were explored and developed spontaneously, and folk arts gradually entered into regular circulation. Nevertheless, advanced technology is developing at a fast pace and has reduced the need for a wide range of handicrafts. Industrial products are increasingly desired by consumers as the demand for high quality and quantity increases. This situation has led to a rapid decrease in folk art production and in the number of folk artists. In (Zhang Daoyi 1986)'s words, there are three types of traditional Chinese folk handicrafts: the first type aims to make works like real objects, which can mix the false with the genuine; the second type aims to make very vivid works with very interesting meanings; the last type aims to achieve a level of uncanny skill and workmanship, which amazes viewers. Both the second and third types can be found in Yanchuan Patchworks.



Figure 3-3. Traditional Chinese folk art: Paper Lantern.



Figure 3-4. Traditional Chinese folk art: Cloud Cappa.

The inheritance of traditional Chinese handicrafts is simple. (Wu Yu 2008) states that there are two ways these handicrafts are inherited: the first way is that artists only inherit their skills from members of their own family, and the second way is between a teacher and disciples through personal instruction. Wu also provided three suggestions for how to protect and develop traditional Chinese handicrafts. First, legislation should be established to increase the strength of protection for these handicrafts. Second, an eco-museum should be built to preserve and introduce the handicrafts to the public. Third, traditional Chinese handicrafts should be protected through the innovation and creation of handicrafts brands. However, (Zhao Nong 2011) believes that any application and promotion of craft skills are based on the expectation of a higher quality of life. The emerging handicrafts must be related to traditional

cultures; meanwhile, craftsmen and women should enhance advantages and avoid weaknesses to be self-reliable. Many countries in the world have already increased the protection and inheritance of cultural heritage as they observe and reflect on the rapid development of industrialization. Thus, (Liu Zhige 2012) suggests that, at this stage in China, we should forbid the use of modernization as an excuse to ignore the protection and development of traditional handicrafts.

3.2.2. From Chinese needlework to Chinese patchwork

(Chen Xiaoping 2009) notes that fabric has existed since humans learned how to weave. From the ruins of Yang Shao culture and other cultures, researchers have found textile tools, such as ceramic and stone spinning wheels and bony ribs. Chinese needlework has a long history, including spinning, starch dyeing, sewing, and embroidery. (Song Minxin 2013) mentions that traditional Chinese needlework is a type of female art that has been passed down from ancient times from mothers and mothers-in-law to their daughters and daughters-in-law. Chinese needlework requires dexterity: in handicrafts women replace ink with needlework and express ideas with tools and materials. They give spirituality to the needles and threads in pursuit of the subtlety of craftsmanship to embody their talent and character. In terms of content, Chinese needlework is a platform for emotional attachment. It is also a way for women to visualize their attitudes and thoughts on life, as well as

their dreams. (Pan Jianhua 2008) pointed to the symbols in Chinese needlework as an example; those symbols might not represent much about the actual painting or the sketch of the object or the person. Instead, artists will first use observations and memories rather than directly imitating what they see. This feature can also be used to explain the symbols used in patchwork.



Figure 3-5. Yanchuan Patchwork of Liu Yanqin.



Figure 3-6. Yanchuan Patchwork of Gao Fenglian.

Patchwork, as a form of traditional Chinese needle work, has been widely circulated in folk art, such as the well-known patchwork clothing, patchwork quilts and so on, as summarized by (Mao Huiwei 2010). Some researchers believe that the origins of patchwork can be traced to a Twenty-Four Filial Piety Story entitled ‘Wearing colorful clothes to make family happy’ 《彩戏娱亲》, which is believed to be the first recording of the art form (Guo, Yuan Dynasty) mentions that ‘a person named Zhou Laolaizi, he came from Chu and he was a filial man,....he was wearing a colorful cloth and pretended to be a dancing baby to make his parents happy’. (Mao Huiwei 2010) believes that if this story is true, the patchwork cloth may have existed as early as the

Chunqiu Period. As a branch of Chinese needlework, traditional Chinese patchwork can still be found in many rural areas in China where it is made by rural women.

Patchwork is a unique textile artform in China, and researchers have found similar types of textile arts in other countries. (Tang Xinxing 2011) determined that American quilting originated in Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries. Due to a cold snap that occurred on the continent of Europe during an era that saw a shortage of materials, people collected and stitched together old pieces of cloth to make quilts to keep warm. Then, as the Americas were discovered, quilted and sewn products were gradually spread from Europe to America by the Puritans, and overtime they became American-style sewn products. Quilting is also a type of Chinese folk art. (Zhou Xi 2012) noted that with the development of society, people's material needs and aesthetic demands are constantly improving. The scope of Chinese quilting has extended into daily necessities, such as back-to-back belts, purses and coolers. The patterns are no longer limited to the stitching of geometric patterns such as triangles, diamonds and squares. some patterns such as coins and moire patterns start appeared into traditional quilting art with richer forms and auspicious meanings. Other types of fabric arts, such as Trapunto in Italy and Temari balls in Japan, are also traditional folk arts, which can reflect different relevant cultural backgrounds.



Figure 3-7. Traditional Chinese quilting.

([http://m.sohu.com/n/413335592/.](http://m.sohu.com/n/413335592/))

3.2.3. The Origin of Yanchuan Patchwork

(Liu Yixi 2014) defined Patchwork as a type of decorative cloth painting that uses the technique of cut and paste. Patchwork involves cutting various coloured cloths into desired shapes, arranging them by sewing techniques and combining them into a decorative picture with a distinctive theme. (Yan Zisan 2009) mentions that there are several different terms for Yanchuan Patchwork from northern Shaanxi Province, for instance ‘Pile of Flowers’ in Yongping Town and ‘Jacquard’ in the regions along the Yellow River. The term ‘Yanchuan Patchwork’ was first used by a local folk artist, Feng Shanyun. (Feng Shanyun and Lan Peijin 2002) has pointed out that patchwork is created by the vast number of working people in the Yanchuan region of northern Shaanxi Province over the course of their life. It is a traditional folk art with extensive mass and distinctive regionality. He has also said that it has rough,

thick and durable features that fully reflect its unique practical value for rural life in northern Shaanxi Province. (Liu Bo 2006) also defined Yanchuan Patchwork as a folk art that uses a variety of different colours, textures and shapes of cloth that are processed through sewing, embroidery, and needlework to create certain patterns. Patchwork originated as a way to extend the use and increase the aesthetic value of damaged clothes by sewing and mending the clothe with traditional pattern. It is a unique artistic expression of Chinese folk arts and handicrafts. This type of folk applique craft is historical and has been widely spread to different nations from north to south. The main application of patchwork is in the decoration of clothing and daily necessities; it is a type of labour completed by rural women who are at the bottom of society in their spare time.

(Yan Zisan 2009) states that Yanchuan Patchwork has a wide range of themes. In early works, most of the themes reflect primitive reproduction worship and the proliferation of human ancestors. The main patterns include ‘fish play lotuses’(鱼戏莲), ‘lotus give birth’ (莲生贵子) , ‘snake twine rabbit’ (蛇盘兔) , and ‘pomegranate and peony’ (石榴牡丹) . Other subject matter, for instance loving couples or religious imagery, was added gradually afterwards, but the main purpose is still reflecting the reality of life in rural areas. (Liu Yixi 2014) said that each pattern on the patchwork has a specific meaning. In (Zhou Lu 2011)’s words, patchwork is vulgar, rustic, and thick with strong colours and vitality. It has characteristics that are similar to the

Han Dynasty Stone Portraits and uses techniques like those involved in paper cutting and the colours of embroidery, showing a relief-like aesthetic perception. (Li Youzheng and Shen Zhi 1995) believe that according to the tradition of hieroglyphic language, the Chinese people have an ingrained habit of thought, which is to express abstract and distant things through concrete visual approaches. (Mao Huiwei 2010) states that from the perspective of Chinese needlework, this so-called “art of the mother” represents the wisdom of Chinese women. They have imbued their love into each stitch of those patchworks, giving new life to each fragment of cloth, as well as giving scope to their imagination and creativity.

Some relevant studies of Yanchuan Patchwork can be found recently, such as ‘*The Patchwork Art of Shaanxi Province*’ by (Feng Shanyun and Lan Peijin 2002); ‘*Women who can cut flowers in Northern Shaanxi*’ by (Gao Shang 2007); ‘*A Summarization of Folk Culture in Northern Shaanxi*’ by (Ji Shengli 2009); ‘*Yanchuan Patchwork of Northern Shaanxi*’ by (Yan Zisan 2009); ‘*Brief Talk on Yanchuan Patchwork*’ by (Feng Fan 2009); ‘*Appreciation of Chinese Folk Art*’ by (Zhou Lu 2011); ‘*Totem of the earth – Approaching Gao Fenglian, the inheritor of Shaanxi Yanchuan Patchwork.*’ by (Ma Congmin and Zhao Yanlu 2013); ‘*An Analysis of the Significance of the Coupling Exploration of North Shaanxi Patchwork and Costume Design*’ by (Li Su 2014); ‘*The Patchwork in North Shaanxi Style*’ by (Fan Wenjun 2014); ‘*Study on the Folk Fabric Color of Northern Shaanxi – Use Yanchuan*

Patchwork as an Example’ by (Bai Xiao and Liang Shaohua 2014); ‘*The Historical Research on Patchwork*’ by (Wang Weili 2014); ‘*The Palace Embroidered Patchwork, Traditional Art enters Intangible Cultural Heritages*’ by (Wei Yumei and Huang Xianyun 2016); and ‘*Inheritance and Application of Patchwork in Modern Cloth Accessories*’ by (Li Wenyu 2017).

3.3 Studies of Semiotics and Philosophy

Semiotic thinking was first used by Peirce, C. S. (1839-1914), an American philosopher, and Saussure, C. (1857-1913), a Swiss linguistic expert. (Peirce, C. S. 1902) established the ‘three-in-one approach of semiotic classification’, which was according to the relationship between three elements: media, object and interpretation. The three core categories of his approach are icon, index and symbol. An American semiotician (Sebeok, T. A. 2001) classified semiotics into the following six categories: signal, symptom, icon, index, symbol and name.

Chinese semiology researchers showed great interest in semiotic classification as well. Some researchers believe that it was many years later that the Chinese term of ‘Semiotics’ was first put forward by Zhao Yuanren in 1980. However, (Zhao Jiaxin 2006) noted that as early as 1926, Zhao Yuanren had already proposed to establish the system of Semiology and described the basic concept and system of General Semiology, it was even

several years earlier than the interrelated discussion of Peirce. He has also clearly put forward the following three goals for the establishment of Chinese Semiotics: first, promoting the modernization of Chinese Humanities; second, promoting self-reflection and adjustment of Western semiotic theory; third, promoting the effective communication between the Chinese and Western Social Humanities Academic Tradition. (Li Leshan 2005) divided semiotics into two categories based on the relationship between subjective and objective properties. They are the logical classification of objective property and the aesthetic classification of subjective property. The advent of Chinese semiotics is mainly due to the exploration of the following three academic areas: structural linguistics, logic, cultural philosophy and aesthetics (Xu Hengchun 2008).

Because semiotics is a branch of philosophy studies, it has included research on the definition and original causes of symbols. Semiotic researchers studied various other creatures as references to make assumptions about the formation of symbols in the natural world. Although the development of Chinese Semiotics started several decades later than in Western countries, its diverse and rich cultural heritage provided researchers with a good environment to study semiotics (Wang Mingyu and Song Yao 2003). In Chinese cultural life, there is a specific semiology related to implication and interpretation. Foreign scholars can understand and appreciate Chinese culture as Chinese people if they devote sufficient time to investigate Chinese

language and culture in an appropriate manner. That is, foreigners can achieve a correct understanding of the typical Chinese cultural performances based on accepting Chinese ideological structure and assumptions, as noted by (Li Youzheng and Shen Zhi 1995). However, (Hansen, C. 1992) believes that the best interpretation of the original text is the only basis for people to make historical judgements of an ancient Chinese philosopher's belief; this interpretation does not necessarily mean that the authors have relevant faith. Another point of view has been presented is that the comparison of the concepts between Chinese and foreign people might only be feasible on the indicating level. Yet, it is unlikely that they will have enough common standards to connect on the connotation level (Li Youzheng and Shen Zhi 1995). This perspective explains why ancient Chinese philosophical discussions can be understood by Western philosophers according to the literal meaning, but it is hard for them to understand the deeper meaning and beauty of the text. (Barnard, M. 2006) determined that connotation is often interpreted as people's cognition of thoughts, feelings and associations of visual works. A similar argument is also applicable to questions about whether Westerners can truly understand Chinese art works because they lack sufficient experiences and contact with relevant Chinese art practice.

Recently, there are four main directions in Chinese semiotics studies. They are (1) basic theoretical research for semiotics; (2) language semiology; (3) applications of semiotics; (4) culture and art semiotics and literary semiotics.

Some of these studies have already referred to traditional Chinese culture. A representative study of Chinese semiotics in cultural philosophy and aesthetics is Chinese Primitivism Philosophy, which originated in primitive society. The proposition of Chinese Primitivism Philosophy is that ‘the combination of Darkness and Brightness produces everything, and everything will continuously breed in reproduction in an endless succession’. This idea is also the philosophical foundation of Chinese folk art, according to (Jin Zhilin 2004). Semiotics can be used as a tool of culturalism to conduct scientific analysis of Chinese thought and culture. The purpose of this method is to implement appropriate semiotic research of certain Chinese themes to increase the intelligibility of Chinese thought and culture. This approach may thus allow us to obtain a clearer explanation of the relationship between cause and result and the significance of such themes than before. Therefore, the corresponding structure and organization of the research objects become more sophisticated (Li Youzheng and Shen Zhi 1995).

3.4 Traditional symbols and Aesthetics

The origin of Chinese symbols can be traced back to several thousand years ago. Among the Neolithic pottery that has been excavated in China, there are more than 20 ruins of totem fish; one of the most abundant is the Banpo painted pottery of the Yang Shao Culture. The BanPo painted pottery with

the human-fish pattern is one of the most typically Chinese semiotic productions, and it was found in 1955 in Shaanxi Province almost 7000 years after it was created. This pottery was made in the Neolithic age and labelled Yang Shao Culture. The patterns on the pottery can be understood as representative symbols of that age, and these patterns can also be interpreted by applying semiotics. According to inferences of the patterns on the pottery, it shows that people in that period may have some specific totem worship and superstitious feelings. (Li Yi and Higashino Hago 2000) believe that the implied meaning in a pattern is based on specific and sensible images that express an associated meaning. Implied meaning plays an intermediary role in visual thinking and association. This phenomenon is not unique to China. (Munn, N. D. 1973) mentioned that the conversion of ancestors is related to several images that represent ideas of fecundity and birth. (Xun Shenglan 2000) noted that there are two features of traditional Chinese symbols. One is it contains a reasonable part of science, which is the summarization of the laws of nature from ancients, and the other is its imagination and symbolic character, which is full of creating awareness.

Looking at the composition of the Banpo painted pottery with the human fish pattern in Figure 2.8 below, it is entirely a combination of dots, lines and surfaces. However, in the content, the highly abstract symbols express the ancient peoples' concept of the totem. It is a social symbol that can be recognized and worshiped by both the creators and users in the community.,

It is also a common symbol that represents the community's culture, concept and aesthetic (Hai Jun 2007). To analyse the symbols on this painted pottery based on knowledge of Chinese Primitivism, the head is the most important part of a human. In the pattern represented in this human face, the forehead represents the heaven, the two eyes represent the sun and the moon, respectively, the mouth represents the maternal womb, which is the source of life reproduction, and the nose signifies the life tree, which can establish a connection between the heaven and the earth. (Jin Zhilin 2004) mentioned that in primitive society, because humans were weak during the struggle with nature, those animals that have special abilities beyond humans became the god's totem animals in peoples' minds. Therefore, it can be speculated that the two fish located beside the human face are an animal symbol of water and the ground, as well as descendants from generation to generation. This piece might represent the earliest appearance of the double fish totem. (Langer, S. K. 1953) believes that the symbol not only has the function of referentiality and expression and conveys the concept but also has a configuration that can formalize human experience and make it objectively presented. Some people believe that the pattern is an accurate portrayal of fishing and hunting Life at that time.



Figure 3-8. The Banpo painted pottery with fish pattern.
(<https://www.92to.com/jujia/2016/12-12/14312328.html>)

The second object in Figures 2.9 is a double fish jade that was produced during the Shang Dynasty, the second dynasty in Chinese history. The double fish was a common and very famous shape at that time. The two fish on the jade are linked end to end, which refers to the darkness (阴) and the brightness (阳) circulating in the universe infinitely according to Chinese Primitivism and represents continuous reproduction in an endless succession. As (Cassirer, E. 1951) said, that signal belongs to the physical world and the symbol belongs to the world of human significance. All forms of human spiritual culture are the product of symbolic activities. (Wang Ti 1996) that ancient people have visualized a subtle philosophical principle, even from abstract to concrete, until changed into two fish. The symbol of the double fish demonstrates the ancient Chinese worship of heaven and earth; it provides a

tacit representation of the Chinese people's potential spiritual consciousness and can also express the deep implication of national culture and arouse widespread association.



Figure 3-9. Dynasty double fish jade.

(http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_88ad36f30102v30v.html)

However, not all researchers believe that the origin of the Tai Chi Diagram is the double fish totem. (Wu Huashu 2016) pointed that the totem '卍' in Figure 2.10 is known as the Symbol of Wan (万). This totem first appeared in Pengtou Mountain Culture approximately nine thousand years ago. Some researchers believe that this totem is one of the archetypes of the Tai Chi Diagram. This totem is also reflected in the geometric patterns of Chinese needlework, which corresponds to the four directions and means everything is balanced. Like the Phoenix figure, Dragon figure and the sun totem, these symbols are all structured like a rotating vortex.



Figure 3-10. The Symbol of Wan.



Figure 3-11. A traditional Chinese female cloth with the Symbol of Wan.

(Source: <http://www.tooopen.com/view/555620.html>)

Figure 2.12 illustrates the evolution of the double fish totem. It shows that from very ancient times, people already had the concept of doubling the number of symbols to constitute a balanced image. The most typically one is

the Tai Chi Diagram, which has become the representative graphic of Zhouyi theory. The word 'Tai Chi' was first put forward in Yi Chuan Copulative 《易传系辞上》, which noted that "the unlimited world represents Tai Chi, then it changed into darkness and brightness, then into four seasons, and eight tri-grams in the end. These eight tri-grams may determine luck or disasters and achieve some great causes." Zhou Dunyi (Song Dynasty 1017-1073) defined the deep meaning of this Tai Chi Diagram, and he mentions that this diagram represents the philosophy of the alternation of the sun and the moon as the origin of everything that has come into being. This diagram shows a mutual transformation and is relatively uniform, formally beautiful and harmonious. Chinese people believe that the Tai Chi diagram is schematically the simplest symbol but the content of it is most rich. It also has the most perfect pattern. (Zhou Laixiang 2003) stated that the Tai Chi diagram is a classic representation of neutralization. It combines round forms and curved forms with black and white into a beautiful picture that is balanced, well-aligned, stable and harmonious. The appearance of the Tai Chi diagram represents the emergence of aesthetic consciousness of ancient Chinese peoples. (Jin Zhilin 2004) believes that in traditional Chinese patterns, the Tai Chi diagram might be the oldest pattern and a perfect pattern.



Figure 3-12. Evolution of the double fish totem.

(<http://www.yx128.com/lunwen72.asp>)

(An Yuying 1985) noted that many of the Chinese ancient folk patterns use the combination and division principles of the Tai Chi diagram for their creation. Therefore, the diagram later developed into a unique aesthetic structure of Chinese national patterns, such as “Happy Encounter” (喜相逢), which is two magpies meeting each other, and “Dragon and Phoenix Bringing Prosperity” (龙凤呈祥). These patterns are all in an alternating form with one figure up and one down in alternating directions. The compositions of the auspicious patterns are vivid and beautiful and have been widely used by folk craftsmen. (Feng Xiaohong 2006) believes that, for thousands of years, ancient Chinese folk art has consistently developed by following a unique philosophical form. It is deeply influenced by the thinking of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, in particular, and the main theme of their philosophy is to present the truth of Being and Not-being and to always grow out of one another. Meanwhile, nothingness and reality exist together.



Figure 3-13. 'Happy Encounter'.

(<http://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/embroider/231356.html>)



Figure 3-14. 'Dragon and Phoenix Bringing Prosperity'.

(<http://www.58pic.com/shiliangtu/1065655.html>)

Since the development of Chinese semiotics from primitive society, more representative totems and patterns have appeared. For example, there is a pair of dragon and phoenix totems on a piece of painted pottery in Figure 2.15 below, which was found in Shaanxi Province at the same time as the Banpo painted pottery with fish pattern. The forms of the pairs also is also representative of primitive Chinese thinking of darkness and brightness. Since then, other patterns have also been found in a variety of early crafts, such as humans, tigers, frogs, sheep, cows, butterflies, snakes, trees, and flowers. All the animals, objects, and plants have their specific meanings in Chinese Primitivism philosophy, and the form of folk arts and crafts has developed into varied and different ways. (Hang, He and Jin 2005) claim that traditional Chinese symbols that have a more than seven thousand-year-old history may provide an important source to rouse local Chinese design to the global level. In China, traditional graphics are affected by different philosophies, religions, folklore and regions; designers will find significant visual value if those images and symbols can be rediscovered from a modern perspective. Traditional graphics may become a cultural identity of China, which can be accepted by the variety of world consumption.

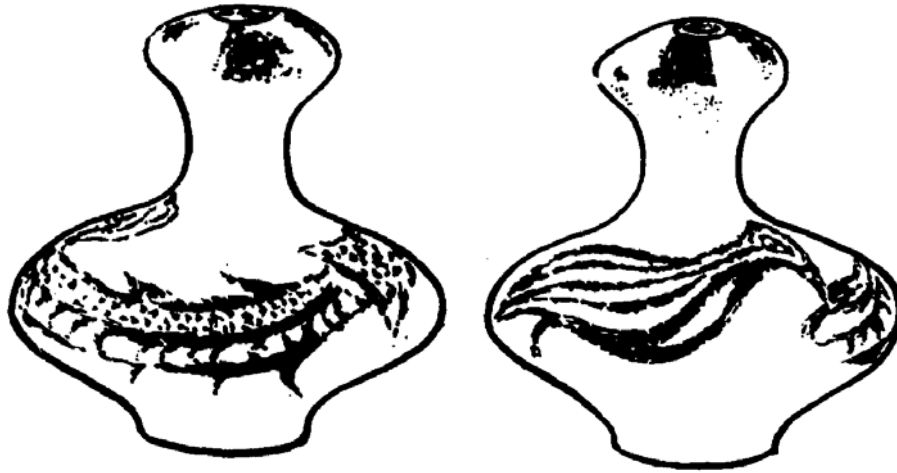


Figure 3-15. Inchoate dragon and phoenix totem from the Neolithic period.
(http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5435da700102vtfl.html)

3.5 Chinese Semiotics in Culture-based Design Innovation.

Semiotics has a significant impact in many artistic fields. It can analysis the meaning of art works from different point of view and at a higher level. It has bridged the connection between the visual arts and visual culture in apt ways, and the connotation has been regarded as a meaningful process to other cultural and social territories. Semiotics has also provided a connection between the visual arts and other disciplines, such as heritage research, according to (Waterton, E. and Watson, S. 2015). Researchers have found semiotic symbols in many Chinese intangible cultural heritages, such as paper cutting and patchwork. Both Waterton and Watson believe that it is obvious that the regions of cultural heritage are impartible with the visual arts. (Li Jin 2014) has noted that Semiotics proposes that symbols have signifiers and referents. The signification refers to the meaning; not only superficial

meaning but also extended meaning. The formation of such a meaning requires the long-term accumulation of historical culture and then gradually becomes a conventional concept. Introducing this concept into specific symbols can constitute the special cultural connotations of these symbols.

Currently, design has become a popular discipline that can enrich people's daily life in aesthetic ways and can make people's lives more convenient by solving various problems. (Ghose, R. 1989) states that design education was primarily developed in Western countries and that modern Chinese design education emerged in the late 1970s. In both design education and the processes of designers, inspiration sources are very important. (Eckert, Stacey and Clarkson 2000) have recommended that the forms of inspiration sources are various. For instance, pictures of objects, sketches, digital performance, art works, natural phenomenon, and texts can all be forms of inspiration. The different forms of inspiration can offer a synthesis of sources for designers to build up their minds while stimulating designers' innovative thinking by providing them with relative memories. Use graphic design as an example, (Li Jin 2014) believes that when graphic design expresses a certain meaning that is similar to a traditional symbol, introducing this traditional symbol into the graphic design project will cause it to have a multiplier effect. Therefore, a traditional symbol is an excellent carrier to extend the meaning of modern graphic design.

In China, traditional cultural symbols are gradually becoming referential image sources for local design practices. Traditional symbols have not only been treated as another art form but also as one that is concern with an additional creative purpose and cultural significance. (Zhang Na 2005) believes that the transition of the visual culture of symbols from traditional Chinese cultural is not completely independent of traditional Chinese thinking. In fact, they are the expression of renewal in a traditional manner. Nevertheless, (Ghose, R. 1989) argued that most of the new generation of design students obtained design knowledge from the modern education system rather than from original folk arts or crafts regions. If they want to gain inspiration from traditional crafts, they must learn from it from very early on. There are many examples of related, but not all designers are able to make good use of traditional graphics, especially foreign designers. Therefore, it is necessary for them to understand the deep meanings of traditional Chinese symbols in a systematic way. Design is a specific expression of the designer's thinking, and designers from different regions have different ways of expressing the same object. There are many aspects that may affect the expression of design methods, so design needs to be combined with regional culture.



Figure 3-16. 'Shang Xia' Playing cards in Chinese painting.
(Source: <http://www.shang-xia.com/gift-corner>)

(Tang Liya 2015) states that, from studies on the connotation of semiotics, researchers have found that common design works generally contain three levels of meaning. The first level of meaning is the real and visible reality; the second level of meaning is the direct meaning; and the third level of meaning is the generally represented metaphor and connotation of the work. For example, Figure 2.16 above shows a series of playing cards, and the name of the brand is 'Shang Xia', which means up and down. It is an art brand of a traditional Chinese lifestyle. In this series of playing cards, 'Shang Xia' commissioned Lin Xi, a contemporary Chinese painter, to create the cards. Rather than the common patterns found on poker cards, Lin subtly painted different objects with specific meanings in traditional Chinese culture. The patterns on these cards are kylin, ganoderma, Bodhi leaves, red peach, and Taihu stone. All these objects contain auspicious meanings that are derived

from the nature world. The artist's main purpose is to create a product that is functional and appreciates the beauty of Chinese culture and the true interest of nature. This example is related to an argument made by (Zhang Na 2005). She asserts that many designers have long begun to rethink traditional Chinese culture and tried to find the inspiration of wisdom from traditional philosophy and aesthetics. Additionally, these artists enrich their design projects by absorbing rich knowledge from traditional culture. (Keane, M. 2007) commented that policies related to cultural innovation industries have been well established in China; especially economic policies that have been applied by many cities to benefit cultural industry workers and emerging industries. On the other hand, (Zhu Liang 2014) holds a different point of view. First, commodity is not the value pursuit of Chinese folk art. Excessive commercialization will change folk art into industrialization and thus, it loses its original cultural context and the spirituality and emotion of folk art itself. Second, he believes that symbolization is a shallow cognition of Chinese folk culture. (Wang Ying 2012) pointed out that Culture-based Design Innovation is starting from the new concept of the protection of intangible cultural heritage, it is proposed to apply innovative design to the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. However, using symbols in folk art can only be a method of modern art or modern design, unless artists and designers can inherit the aesthetic character and cognitive philosophy, along with the spirit of the times simultaneously, we can then truly achieve the

development and innovation of Chinese culture. Therefore, the so-called “Culture-based Design Innovation” is not that easy for modern designers to conduct because it depends on how much they understand their culture.

3.6 Conclusion

Through this literature research, the author has discovered most of the theoretical support for this thesis. A systematic theory structure has been established related to some of the research questions. However, some information gaps remain. For instance, there are seldom references introducing the connotations of Yanchuan Patchwork, as well as the detailed production process involved in making these works. These gaps could be the reasons for the author to conduct primary research, and the following chapters will bridge the gap of the lacking information.

CHAPTER 4 A CLOSER LOOK AT THE AWARENESS, MEANING AND THE INHERITANCE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to show the details of the case studies in different areas. These case studies are mainly focused on the exploration of Yanchuan Patchwork, the comparison between Yanchuan Patchwork and Hua County Steamed Flower Buns and the observation of a Chinese folk-art summer camp. The research questions ‘what are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan Patchwork?’ and ‘how do folk artists improve their ways of imparting their skills to subsequent generations?’ have been addressed. Because Yanchuan patchwork can be classified as a type of traditional Chinese folk art, all the studies below are focused on Chinese folk arts, followed by some relevant studies that have been conducted by other researchers.

- 1) For Yanchuan patchwork: The author has referred to ‘*The Patchwork Art of Shaanxi Province*’ written by (Feng Shanyun and Lan Peijin 2002), ‘*Yanchuan Patchwork of Northern Shaanxi*’ written by (Yan Zisan 2009). There are not many in-depth studies on Yanchuan patchwork. These articles briefly introduce the definition and art forms of Yanchuan

patchwork, and this thesis will introduce it more comprehensively in more aspects.

- 2) For the paper cutting art of Gao Fenglian's family: There are '*Chinese Folk Paper Cutting and Gao Fenglian's Paper Cutting Art*' written by (Jin Zhilin 1999); '*Evolution of Humanity: The Image Production and Diagram Research of Gao Fenglian's Paper Cutting Works*' written by (Zhu Liang 2015); and '*The Paper Cutting Life of Gao Fenglian*' written by (Zhou Lu 2013). These articles have shown the art value of Gao Fenglian's paper cutting from its appearance to its connotation. Another book named '*Scene of livelihood*' written by (Liu Fengzhen 2002) describes the life of Gao Fenglian, which is based on the dictation of Gao Fenglian and her daughter Liu Jieqiong.
- 3) For interpretation and analysis of traditional Chinese symbols: The author has referred to '*Chinese folk art*' written by (Jin Zhilin 2004), '*Zhuaji Doll and the Original Concept of the Human Group*' written by (Jin Zhilin 2001), '*Continuous melons and the birth of Chinese Primitivism Philosophy*' written by (Jin Zhilin 2002). Professor Jin has made great contribution to the theory of Chinese Primitivism Philosophy throughout his life. His books are, which based on concrete investigative materials and rich images, use 'Sheng Sheng Thinking' and 'Yin Yang Thinking' as the foundation of Chinese philosophy, which fully explains the inheritance relationship between Chinese folk art and Chinese primitive

culture. Some other articles include ‘*Brief review on Chinese symbols and traditional modeling*’ written by (Xun Shenglan 2000); ‘*Communication between Human and God: Chinese Cultural Symbols of Sacrifice*’ written by (Zhai Mingan and Zheng Ping 2005); ‘*Dictionary of Chinese Folk-Art*’ by (Liu Bo 2006); ‘*Discussion of Chinese Folk Art*’ by (Pan Lusheng 1990); and ‘*The Chinese traditional art theory*’ written by (Zhang Daoyi 1998) These articles have interpreted the meanings of different symbols in various of Chinese folk arts systematically.

- 4) For the research method of Art Anthropology, works include ‘*Some Essential Issues of Art Anthropology*’ by (Li Xiujian 2012), ‘*West Trip Diary: Shaanxi Folk Art Diary*’ by Fang Lili 2010), and ‘*The Art Anthropology*’ wrote by both (Li Xiujian and Fang Lili 2013). These articles are closely related to research into the Chinese folk arts. Some systematic research methods can be found in articles such as ‘*The Anthropology of Art*’ by (Layton, R. 1991) and ‘*Art as Culture: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Art*’ by (Hatcher, E. P. 1999).
- 5) For the relationship between Chinese folk art and design, works include ‘*Three Durable Plants of Winter: Traditional Chinese Graphs & Modern Visual Design*’, edited by (Hang, He and Jin 2005). They are famous researchers and modern designers in China, and this book is a collection of articles related to the development trend of Chinese folk art and design in different fields. Another book named ‘*The Poetics of Vison – the*

Symbolic Dimension of Graphic Design by (Hai Jun 2007) conducts a theoretical analysis and interpretation of graphic design through the method of semiotic structured analysis. (Xu Hengchun 2008) has written a book named '*Design Semiology*' that is also related to the study of semiotics and design. '*Design Investigation*' is the first professional publication of design investigation and was written by (Li Leshan 2007). This book introduced systematic methods of design investigation based on the author's seven years of research and teaching experience.

According to the references above, the first and second studies introduced some pilot studies of Yanchuan patchwork and made comparisons between the different art forms. In the third study, the research question of what the specific meanings of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan patchwork are will be explained, and the fourth study will explain how folk artists transfer their skills to new generations through sufficient observations.

4.2 Masters and their Inspirations in Natural Living Area: A Field Study in Yanchuan County.

This field study was conducted in Yanchuan County, which is the cradleland of Yanchuan patchwork. To develop a detailed understanding of Yanchuan patchwork and its creative community, it is necessary to know more about the area where it is located. Yanchuan County is located in the northern part

of Shaanxi Province. It belongs to the hilly and gully region of the Loess Plateau, and the terrain is tilted from northwest to southeast with an elevation of 700 to 1000 metres, spanning from east longitudes $109^{\circ} 36' \sim 110^{\circ} 26'$ and north latitudes $36^{\circ} 37' \sim 37^{\circ} 5'$ (Feng Ruirong 1999). The jurisdiction of Yanchuan extends from the east to the Yellow River and Shanxi Yong River, across the river from Shilou County, to Yanchang County in the south, to Yan'an City and Zichang County in the west, and to Qingjian County in the north. Yanchuan County is on average 70 kilometres long from east to west and 39 kilometres wide from north to south, with a total area of 1832 square kilometres. The local people usually describe their locations as west of the river and east of the river, as there is a river that runs through the whole county, the Xiuyan River. As of 2015, the total population of Yanchuan County was 19.08 million, which includes an agricultural population of 13.5 million. Yanchuan is a historical county with a broad and deep cultural heritage. The most representative intangible cultural heritages are paper cutting and patchwork. Because of its well-known traditional handicrafts, the Ministry of Culture has named Yanchuan County the "Chinese modern folk art painting village." However, (Zhang Shiyan 2012) noted that the large number of farmers in Yanchuan with a low cultural level, low income and poor overall quality has seriously restricted the development of Yanchuan.

rejection and good data collection. The duration of each interview is approximately one to two hours, and they were recorded by recording pen and video.

Length of time: 7 Days (25/09/2014 to 02/10/2015)

Road map: Hong Kong – Xi'an – Yanchuan County – Hong Kong

Research area: The current status of Yanchuan patchwork and its patchwork artists.

4.2.1. Purpose

To obtain an elementary understanding of Yanchuan patchwork, the main purpose of this field trip is to realize the current living situation of the patchwork artists in Yanchuan County. The skills of both paper cutting and patchwork of Yanchuan are very unique in China. The works of Feng Shanyun and Gao Fenglian have particularly good reputations in both China and abroad. Therefore, understanding the creating environment of these masters is the starting point of this research. First, it is important to realize the backgrounds of the masters such as where they live, how many people in their families do patchwork as well, and what types of awards they have. Second, we should determine what problems they encounter and to what extent we can provide help and support to them.

Another purpose is to obtain a deeper understanding of the creative motivations and connotations in each person's patchworks, and the significances and social values will then be found through a systematic comparison and analysis. Last but not least, possibilities for cooperation with local artists for culture-based design innovation to protect the intangible cultural heritages and the required skills will be explored.

4.2.2. Summary of activities

4.2.2.1. “New Silk Road, New Thinking”: Cultural and Creative Industry Development Forum

Before starting the study trip, the author attended the “New Silk road, New Thinking” cultural and creative industry development forum that was chaired by Professor Wang Zhongmin, the dean of Xi'an Tongli International College. Professor Tang Mingxi gave a presentation at the forum, “To Promote Cultural and Creative Industry Development in Shaanxi Province through Product Design”. In the presentation, Professor Tang showed a documentary named ‘The Master of Faces’ that was recorded in cooperation with the Chencang District Cultural Center in Baoji City. From this experiment, he obtained much inspiration from traditional cultures. Professor Tang thus proposed a theoretical framework and model that encouraged promoting the development of cultural and creative industries through product design. This model emphasizes the importance of design innovation in product design and

development. Based on this theoretical framework, Professor Tang imparted knowledge of the rich history, cultural and artistic traditions, and excellent craftsmanship to audiences, redefining the cultural connotation of product design. He also showed several Shaanxi culture-based design cases from his own experiments, as well as planned collaborations with Shaanxi artists to develop new products in the future. This presentation was the guide of the study trips below and provided much inspiration and passion for this research.

4.2.2.2. Interview with a patchwork artist: Liu Jieqiong

1) Introduction



Figure 4-2. Portrait of Liu Jieqiong.

Liu Jieqiong is one of the most important people in the whole research project, as it was she who connected the whole Gao Fenglian family together. Gao Fenglian is the leading figure in this research; she made great contributions to Yanchuan patchwork, and her works have extremely high research value and cultural influence. The most unfortunate thing is that Gao passed away in 2017 before the close of this project; therefore, the next best way to learn about Gao is to build a strong connection with her daughter, Liu Jieqiong. Liu

Jieqiong was born in Yanchuan in 1967. She is the second generation of inheritance in Gao Fenglian's family and the youngest daughter of Gao Fenglian. Besides Liu Jieqiong, none of her brothers or sisters inherited the skills of Gao Fenglian. Liu learned her skills directly from her mother. Both her paper-cutting and patchwork have won many awards and have been reported on by different media in China and abroad. Of those awards, the highest, no doubt, is the Shanhua Award, which is a national folk art prize jointly issued by the China Federation of Literary and Art and the China Folk Literature and Art Association.

The style of Liu's patchwork is very delicate and colourful. She used to sing a type of local Shaanxi melody named 'Xin Tian You' when she was making patchworks. Most of the lyrics of Xin Tian You are about love and rural life, so she combined her patchwork with those themes. This series of her work fully reflects the characteristics of the northwest area of Shaanxi Province. She has also done patchwork with ancient mythology themes, such as 'Zhuaji Doll' and 'God of Wealth'; her knowledge of these mythologies was learned from her mother, Gao Fenglian.



Figure 4-3. Patchworks of Liu Jieqiong.



Figure 4-4. Patchworks of Liu Jieqiong.

2) Living environment

Liu Jieqiong was the first master we met in Yanchua County. We visited her home and appreciated her patchworks. She is now living in a residential

building in the downtown of Yanchuan with her husband, Wang Wei, and a daughter, Wang Shi. They moved into this place in 2005; before that, they lived in a rented cave house. Even in the county town, the community still looks very old without any lifts or gardens but is surrounded by some small stores, local restaurants and street peddlers. On every weekend, there is a lively market near the river that can be found only in rural areas, and they used to buy the basic cotton cloth for patchwork at that market. In her home, we saw that she has decorated their living room with a huge patchwork, and there were more than ten paper-cutting works hanging on the wall. We have seen huge amounts of red paper and cotton cloth in different colours in Liu's home, and many paper-cutting works in progress were displayed on the floor.

3) Some dictations about creation

Liu is a very warm-hearted woman who was very willing to talk with us. She introduced some of her works to us and explained their elements in great detail. From those beautiful works, we felt her honest and creative enthusiasm. She told us that it is said that in Yanchuan County, it is not an exaggeration that any woman who has the ability to give birth can do paper cutting. Ms. Liu said she used to be very busy every day and never take a long rest. Liu has not made paper cuttings or patchwork for 3 years; rather, she is currently collecting all the documents and works for herself, her mother Gao Fenglian and her niece Fan Rongrong and trying to write a book about them.

Liu said that her mother Gao Fenglian never spoke about their works when she was invited to forums, but she instead wished to share with people how to be a good person and how to live. In May 2014, they were invited to hold a great exhibition in the Chinese national gallery and another two exhibitions in the United States and Canada. They showed off traditional Chinese culture in front of foreigners and opened their eyes. The foreigners were excited and could not believe that those hands could create such beautiful and delicate works. From her words, we can see how excited she is that these rural women brought their skills abroad. She thought that these exhibitions were very successful, especially the one in the National Mall of Washington, as people were able to fully interact together. We found that she was very proud of herself and her family; they are willing to carry forward traditional Chinese folk art and their skills to the whole world. After speaking with Liu, we found that holding relevant exhibitions is a good way to introduce those types of folk art to more people.

4.2.2.3. Interview with a patchwork artist: Feng Shanyun

1) Introduction



Figure 4-5. Portrait of Feng Shanyun.

Feng Shanyun was born in 1949 in Yanchuan County. He has devoted his life to the data collection and innovation of Yanchuan patchwork and has delivered many patchwork training courses since 1981. In his daily life, he usually does paper cutting, patchwork and woodcuts, but he is now concentrating more on oil painting. He was the first person who discovered Gao Fenglian's talent in paper cutting. After he introduced Gao's work to Professor Jin Zhilin, the two of them encouraged her to become a real folk art master. Feng has cultivated hundreds of patchwork students and made great contributions to popularize patchwork in his life.

The style of Feng's patchwork is rough and abstract; he said that he was influenced by the two famous artists Picasso (1881 – 1973) and Matisse (1869 – 1954). Most of his work is about rural people's daily lives around the Yellow River region. His works fully represent the inner world of this rural man, full of his expectations and hopes, and his honest nature.



Figure 4-6. Patchwork of Feng Shanyun.



Figure 4-7. Patchwork of Feng Shanyun.

2) Living environment

The author was invited to visit Feng Shanyun's cave house, and we saw many of his works there. This cave house is located near the centre of Yanchuan County and has two floors. He lives on the first floor with his wife, and he has decorated the second floor as his personal gallery. The decoration of this cave house is very simple, but the roomy space and the bright light are suitable for Feng Shanyun to create his works. On the walls of the cave house, we found many of both Feng's and his wife's paper cuttings and patchworks. By appreciating these works, we can feel their passion for life. There is a type of rugged feeling and indomitable spirit from the Loess Plateau in all of his works. Feng likes to talk about his understanding of home and life. He told us that, in accordance with the custom in Yanchuan County, when a person dies, the family members place a copper coin in his/ her mouth. After he had

two serious operations, he realized that there is nothing that people can receive after they die, as all wealth is merely external. Thus, he works very hard on creative new projects and never wastes a moment of his life.

3) Some discussions about creation

When talking about how to ensure that a cultural heritage continues, Feng Shanyun said that when some folk artists became famous and earned much money, they were not willing to share their experiences with others. These folk artists cannot be called masters in Feng's mind because they do not have a sense of responsibility. Feng believes that a real master should be very willing to share their experiences and spirit with others and pass them on to the next generation. Recently, some craftsmen have begun producing their works in a commercialized manner. Feng believes that these works have lost their connection to the ancient cultural heritage. There are other craftsmen who over-emphasize skills rather than the aesthetic form and connotation of the works; their works lack a soul. Feng Shanyun believes that "Art comes from life" from beginning to end, so that a good piece of artwork must contain the true feeling of life.

The first time we met him, he was creating an oil painting and came to have dinner with us wearing just his painting jacket. Liu Jieqiong and Feng Shanyun have been friends for many years. Before the interview, we thought that Feng and Liu may compete with each other because both of them are

famous at making paper cuttings and patchworks, but the truth is that Liu still treats Feng as her best friend and her tutor. Feng believes that communication is a good means of study. He is very willing to meet different kinds of people. This old man is very optimistic, and we cannot believe that he is a person who has experienced two serious operations in his stomach and heart. Through communication with him, we came to understand his concern for the future of folk art as well as his expectations for life.

4.2.2.4. Interview with a patchwork artist: Gao Fenglian

1) Introduction



Figure 4-8. Portrait of Gao Fenglian.

Gao Fenglian is the main character of this study because she is one of the most representative figures of the rural folk artists in northern China. Gao was born in Yanchuan County in 1936. Both her mother and her grandmother were able to do paper cutting and needlework very well, and her grandmother even established an embroidery factory. Due to their influence from her

childhood, Gao Fenglian started learning and making paper cuttings when she was 10 years old and started making patchwork in 1986. She used to have three sons and three daughters, but her second daughter died in childbirth. She has transferred her skills to her youngest daughter Liu Jieqiong and one of her granddaughters, Fan Rongrong, who is the daughter of her second daughter. In this way, her craftsmanship has become a three-generation art. Gao Fenglian has received numerous awards for paper cutting and patchwork. She is one of the Chinese first-class Masters of Folk Arts and Crafts, and experts in China and abroad have given her works very high regard.

The style of Gao Fenglian's work is rugged and rustic, bold and assertive, and full of energy, and it exhibits her profound artistic skills and displays superior aesthetic value. The contents of her work are very broad and include ancient mythology and real farm life, as well as primitive Chinese philosophy and ancient totem culture. The ancient totem culture and art forms have been preserved in Chinese folk paper cutting and patchwork due to the relatively enclosed environment and transport of historical developments, as well as the destruction of the natural ecosystem in the northwest part of China. Her works also fully reflect people's life consciousness and reproduction consciousness, which not only represent their local features but also her spirit of diligence and kindness. We can see a very rich accumulation of totem culture in Gao Fenglian's art works.



Figure 4-9. Gao Fenglian's patchwork: 'Door Gods'



Figure 4-10. Gao Fenglian's patchwork: 'Kirin sending a child'

2) Living environment

We met Gao Fenglian in her cave house in the Baijia Tableland. It had rained for 2 days, and the road condition to the Baijia Tableland was very bad

because it is in the mountains and thus driving is not easy. Gao Fenglian has lived in this cave house, which has also been her personal art gallery since 2005. The cave house has an area of 400 square metres. It has one floor and 12 rooms in total. There are 4 rooms that exhibit the works of Gao Fenglian, her daughter Liu Jieqiong and her granddaughter Fan Rongrong, 4 bedrooms, 1 kitchen, 1 dining room, 1 bathroom and 1 storeroom. In the yard, there is a small area of farmland, a stone mill, a pavilion and 2 dogs. It was Ku Shulan (1920 – 2004) who influenced Gao to build this gallery in the cave house. Paper cuttings and patchwork are not easy to preserve, and she wanted to save her works and pass them from generation to generation.



Figure 4-11. Gao Fenglian's cave house and art gallery.



Figure 4-12. Gao Fenglian's cave house and art gallery.

3) Some discussions about creation

Gao has been invited to participate in many forums, but she talks little about her works during these activities. Instead, she shares her experience of life and discusses how to become a good person. She works very hard. When we arrived at her cave house, she was watering the vegetables that she planted by herself in the small plot of farmland. She said that this is what a rural woman's life should be. We visited all of the 4 exhibition rooms and saw some giant pieces of paper cutting and patchwork. However, the 4 rooms show far from all of her works. We asked to see more of her patchworks, and she willingly showed them to us. Gao had kept almost all her patchworks under her bed, and when she opened the wood board, it looked like a large treasure chest. Her eldest daughter helped her take the patchworks out and display them on the bed; they are really amazing. We found that most of her patchworks are about traditional Chinese mythological characters such as the

God of Wealth, Door Gods, Kitchen God, and Zhuaji Doll. She also created many patchworks for Chinese festivals, weddings and rituals, all with the aim of expressing her hopes and good wishes for her family.



Figure 4-13. Gao Fenglian and her patchworks on her bed.



Figure 4-14. Gao Fenglian's patchworks on her bed.

For the production of Yanchuan patchwork, Gao told us that she did the fabric dyeing every year, and this is quite difficult work. First, they buy cotton from the market in town. Then, they boil water in some large pots and add dyes to the pot when the water is boiling. They put the cotton fabric inside the boiling

water and make sure the fabrics are fully submerged. After boiling the fabrics for a few hours, they take the fabrics out and wash them a few times and hang them in the yard. When the fabrics are totally dry, they brush them with a thin layer of paste, use a wooden mallet on the fabrics again and again until the paste is smooth and wait for them to dry again. It used to take a few days to finish the whole dyeing progress of the fabric, and it hurt Gao's hands very badly.



Figure 4-15. Gao Fenglian preparing dye.



Figure 4-16. Gao Fenglian dyeing fabrics in boiled water by herself.



Figure 4-17. Hanging fabrics in the yard.

It was a pity that we could not watch how she dyes the fabrics, but Gao Fenglian said that she would like to show us how to make a sample of patchwork. The first step is to cut the shape of the main body part on paper and transfer it onto a piece of cloth using some pins. The second step is sticking the cloth on another piece of cloth of a different colour and cutting down a larger shape along the edge. Then, the patchwork is decorated by sticking smaller symbols on each part such as the face and body layer by layer. To enrich the patchwork, she used to embroider some subtle part of the patchwork such as the pattern on a fish or the hair of a tiger as the last step.



Figure 4-18. Gao Fenglian teaching the author how to make patchwork.

It was surprising to learn that Gao had prepared many small symbols, such as birds, flowers, clouds and fire totems, and stored them in some small boxes (Figures 20 – 21). This provided the author the inspiration to make a detailed analysis of the symbols in Yanchuan patchwork. The skill of making patchwork is not difficult, but it needs much imagination and patience. In my opinion, the most difficult part is the organization because the artist should paint the structure of the whole picture in their mind. Upon listening to Gao Fenglian introduce her works to us, we found deep cultural connotations in her works according to the representation of the philosophy of Chinese primitivism and of Yin and Yang. Later in Chapter 5, these connotations will be discussed in detail in the analysis of Gao's works.

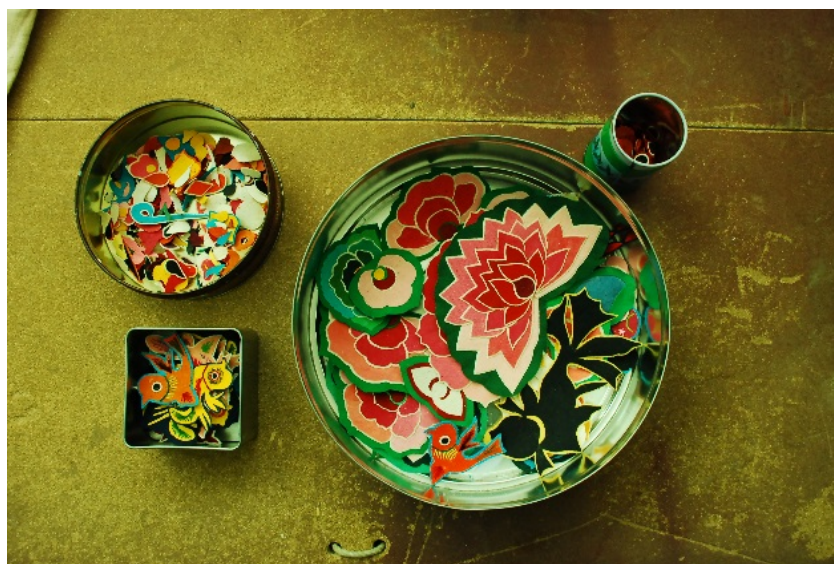


Figure 4-19. Boxes of Gao Fenglian's small patchwork parts.



Figure 4-20. Boxes of Gao Fenglian's small patchwork parts.

4.2.2.5. Interview with a patchwork artist: Guo Rulin

1) Introduction



Figure 4-21. Portrait of Guo Rulin.

Guo Rulin was born in Yanchuan in 1962. He is one of Shaanxi Province's first- class Masters of Folk Arts and Crafts and the Vice-Chairman of the China International Paper Cutting Association. In the last few decades, Guo Rulin has been awarded many achievements and honours. We made an appointment with him and visited his cave house near the centre part of Yanchuan County.

Guo Rulin is not the only male who makes patchwork and paper cuttings in Yanchuan, but his works are very delicate, and even women cannot create such delicate work as he does. The colours of his patchworks are very powerful, and the most complicated part of his patchwork has approximately 15 layers of cloth. He performs the dyeing of fabrics every March and April by himself with his wife because summer is too hot and dry and the autumn and winter too cold for the fabrics to achieve the right colours.



Figure 4-22. Patchwork of Guo Rulin.



Figure 4-23. Patchwork of Guo Rulin.

2) Living environment

Guo Rulin lives in a cave house with his family. It is located on the west side of Xiuyan River and is also very near the centre of Yanchuan County. The cave house is not a large one, but Guo has adorned the walls of the rooms in his cave house with floral cloths and decorated some door curtains with patchworks.

3) Some discussions of creation

Guo said that currently he performs paper cuttings more than patchworks because this may make him become well-known by people. However, patchworks have also occupied more of his time than paper cuttings do. During the process of creation, Guo said that he is not afraid of taking time, as he wishes to make his works as perfect as he can. He used to take out the works that he made many years ago and compare them with his new works to learn from them. He also likes to ask other people to give some suggestions on his works and then think about them and try to improve them. Both of us admired his spirit after speaking to him. When talking about how he passes on his craft skills to his children, he felt a little bit sad: all of his children are very busy and do not have time to learn it; they have instead adopted living in big cities with advanced technology. Many artists and photographers come to his home every year to visit him and talk with him; some teachers in art colleges led their students to study with Guo during their summer and winter holidays. He was very willing to spend time with the students and share his

skills with them; this could be another way to transfer his skills and spirit. Guo has some wishes: first, he wishes that his oldest daughter can start to learn paper cutting and patchwork and pass them on to others to make a contribution to society; second, he wishes to have his own gallery to show off all his works; and last, he wishes to become a national first-class Master of Arts and Crafts. This rural man is rustic and honest; he would like to use his power to let more people understand the spirit of Yanchuan patchwork.

4.2.3. Results and Discussions

During these few days of field study, some first-handed data were collected. Some photos of each artist's patchworks have been taken, and some videos have been recorded by digital camera with their permission. A rough understanding of the living situation in Yanchuan County and the living quality of those patchwork artists was achieved and recorded. Yanchuan has a shortage of materials compared with some northwest cities such as Xi'an or Lanzhou, but it is developing rapidly because the local government has prioritized greatly the protection of traditional culture and folk art in this region. Of these four masters, Liu Jieqiong lives in a modern building; Guo Rulin and Feng Shanyun live in cave houses near the centre of the county; and only Gao Fenglian lives in a cave house in a remote mountainous area and has maintained the life style of a farmer.

The creative motivation of these folk artists is their love of life and art. The living environment in Yanchuan keeps them away from the hustle and bustle of the city and can provide them more time to do what they love more comfortably. It is worth noting that although Gao Fenglian is living like a farmer, she already had an awareness of protecting her art works. This can be a positive paradigm for other folk artists in other regions. Some examples of their patchwork have been collected to conduct a deep analysis in the following sections.

Two limitations have been found from this study trip. First, the duration of the trip is too short, so we could not conduct the interviews on a deeper level and develop a stable relationship with these artists. This limitation also prevented us from investigating more of other patchwork artists' living situations in Yanchuan and other surrounding areas and looking at their works. The second limitation is that the preparation of investigation culture-based design innovation was not enough at this stage, so it was difficult for the author to conduct discussions with the folk artists in detail. In addition, most of them have no awareness of protecting their works using some innovative methods. When the author asked them relevant questions, they could not provide useful information. It seems that they are vigilant of other people using their works in other forms or negatively impacting their copyrights.

4.3 Transfer of symbols between art forms in the natural environment: Pilot Study on Steamed Flower Buns in Hua County.

Hua County is located in the north part of Qin Mountain and the south coast of the Wei River. (Zhang Xiaojuan 2012) stated that Hua County has a long history. Since early in the Neolithic Age, the people's ancestors lived here for a long time. The discovery of a large number of ancient cultural sites in this county is a testimony to China's early civilization. The state of Zheng was established here during the period of the Western Zhou Dynasty, after which Huazhou was established, and it is now called Hua County. It is approximately 70 kilometres from Xi'an city and 30 kilometres from Hua Mountain. One of the most famous forms of folk art in Hua County is steamed flower buns. (Zhang Xiaojuan 2012) notes that steamed flower buns are also known as flower buns, ceremonial buns, wonton, Yanyan, flower sheep and flour sculpture. Mainly seen in China's Yellow Basin, they are a kind of folk art form that combines ancient folk ritual activities and belong to women's artistic creations. Due to the limited time, we chose an exhibition hall held by Hua Mian Meng Cultural Industry Co., Ltd., which can be found on the internet, and the interviewee is a related local researcher named Liu Gaochao. The reason for choosing this place is because a very diverse collection of steamed flower buns displayed here, and the viewing time is about two to three hours. Mr. Liu patiently introduced relevant knowledge of Hua County

steamed flower buns to us. The interview with him was recorded using a recording pen, and all the works were recorded by digital camera.

Length of time: 1 Day (03/04/2015)

Road map: Xi'an – Hua County – Xi'an

Research area: The general knowledge of traditional Chinese symbols in steamed flower buns.

4.3.1. Purpose

Yanchuan County and Hua County are in the same province. Yanchuan patchwork is a two-dimensional folk art, and the steamed flower buns in Hua County are a kind of traditional three-dimensional folk art. Both of these art forms include various combinations of traditional Chinese symbols. Do those symbols have same connotations? In what kind of situation do people usually use these symbols? The purpose of this study is to investigate the similarities and differences between these two forms of Shaanxi folk art and to observe the application of Chinese semiotics in the steamed flower bun through the comparison of them.

4.3.2. Origin of the steamed flower bun

The steamed flower bun is also known as the flour figurine, ceremonial bun and village flower; different regions have different names for it. The raw material for these buns is edible flour; it is a food art form with a variety of

shapes and created by using different tools such as scissors, chopsticks and a comb. It has been widespread in the northern part of China, especially in the provinces along the Yellow River basin, because they eat flour-made dishes as their staple food (Xu Lu 2009). The origin of the decorum and custom of the steamed flower bun is related to the primitive sacrificial activities. (Zhai Mingan and Zheng Ping 2005) hold that the religious sacrificial ceremony is an ancient ritual in which people convey information to the gods through offering sacrifices in a particular time and place. The sacrifices represent gifts that are dedicated to the gods and are materialized in symbolic forms; people's eating behaviour has gradually evolved into a way of sacrificing gods. In ancient China, due to the fear of the mysterious power of nature, people pray for the gods to bless them and make sacrifices to pacify their gods. The original oblations are some foods and implements, and the highest form in primitive religious sacrificial activities is to offer live animals, even human beings, as oblations through burning, burying alive, submerging or hanging as a sacrifice to the God of Heaven, God of Mountains, God of Rivers and God of Earth. These kinds of customs have spread for many years.

With the increasing of social civilization, people gradually realized that the form of using living things to worship the gods is too cruel. To express reverence for the gods and avoid killing living things, people in the Hua County area have created the steamed flower bun that combines both the animal and human characters. Since then, the steamed flower bun has become

the derivative of oblations, and it belongs to the oldest branch of traditional folk art. Archaeologists have discovered specimens of grain and wheat from seven thousand years ago in the historic site of Yang Shao culture, which provided the material basis for the creation of the steamed flower bun.

4.3.3. Analysis and Discussion



Figure 4-24. Hua County steamed flower buns of the twelve Chinese zodiac animals.

From the perspective of folklore, there are three types of the Hua County steamed flower bun. The first one is related to the local custom and seasonal festivals such as the crouching tiger, fish, jujube hill, and the twelve zodiac animals (Figure 4-24). These kinds of steamed flower buns are very small, and each of them is related to a kind of traditional Chinese symbol and fully represent the philosophy of Chinese primitivism. They are hand-made of water and flour and then steamed by local people. Some sample tools that might be used are the scissors and comb. They keep the original colour and

flavour of flour and are edible. The purpose of making these buns is to celebrate the Lunar New Year or for people to give gifts to their children, friends and relatives. Thus, the local people have always used these edible buns to entertain their guests until recent days.



Figure 4-25. Hua County steamed flower buns called millet volume.

Another type of the Hua County steamed flower bun named the ‘millet volume’ (饅卷) is used in some large-scale events and folk activities such as a wedding, opening ceremony, or old person’s birthday of sixty or eighty. The ‘millet volume’ in Figure 25 above is for use in weddings. Its name reflects the best wishes for having ample food and clothing of local people. (Nan Zhigang 1996) mentions that the basic shape of the millet volume is a combination of a tiger’s head, dragon’s body and fish’s tail. Some people will decorate the tiger’s head with different kinds of necklaces or place the decoration of ‘Two dragons playing with a pearl’ on the neck of the tiger; people will also add many bird, animal, flower and tree symbols on the body

parts; all these stylings are mythological. The tiger, dragon and fish are the most representative totemic animals in traditional Chinese worship. In detail, the eyes of it are decorated with chrysanthemums, which mean wishes for a long life; two fishes as its eyebrows reflect the shape of the double fish totem and the thinking of Yin and Yang; and a crouching sparrow is used instead of its nose because the Chinese pronunciation of sparrow is similar to that of happiness. The body part of the millet volume is normally decorated with a phoenix and dragon or a group of the twelve Chinese zodiac animals to represent a complete life.



Figure 4-26. The dish of steamed flower buns.

The highest level form of the Hua County steamed flower bun is a compositional style named ‘the dish of steamed flower buns’ (馍盘), and it is very spectacular. This kind of steamed flower bun can be found only in rich families in Hua County, and it is used for celebrating weddings or an old

person's birthday. Figures 26 and 27 show a whole wedding dish of steamed buns named 'Dragon and Phoenix Bringing Prosperity' (龙凤呈祥) and its detailed parts.

Looking at the whole shape and different buns in this dish of steamed flower buns, there are nine tiers of it in total, and each tier has twelve small size flower buns with different connotations. The display sequence of it is from bottom to top, and it describes a whole life of newlyweds from when they fall in love until they die. Starting from the first tier, the name of the small flower bun is 'shoulder pole' (扁担馍), which is combined with the bat element to represent happiness in Chinese pronunciation; the hooked shape reflects the action of hooking up to each other. The name of the buns on the second tier is 'satisfactory lotus' (如意莲花馍), which is normally used as a prayer for a satisfactory life or early birth of a healthy baby. All the steamed flower buns in the third and fourth tiers are plants and animals, such as the horse and the orchid, that have auspicious meanings. The fifth and the most important tier has a pair of dragon and phoenix, which means the combination of these two people; it is also a reflection of the thinking of Yin and Yang. There is a small bun with a humanoid shape between them, which represents giving birth to a child. The sixth tier is surrounded by twelve Jian Jian birds (鹣鹣鸟). The mandarin duck is a kind of waterfowl that is well known as the symbol of love, and the Jian Jian bird is a kind of fowl that conveys love and devotion because the female bird and male bird never depart from each other. There

are six chicken buns and six fish buns in the seventh tier. The Chinese pronunciation of 'chicken' is similar to auspicious, and 'fish' is similar to getting more than you wish for. The eighth tier aims to represent a Chinese word '耄耋之年', which means health and longevity of old people. The Chinese pronunciation of the words '耄' and '耋' are similar to cat and butterfly; thus, the artist has created a cat shape to reflect the relevant meaning. The buns on the top tier are shaped like a pair of vases, which indicate a peaceful and colourful life, which is similar to the Chinese pronunciation of 'vase'. This dish of steamed buns has narrated a whole life of a couple and expresses the best wishes from the relatives to the newlyweds.

4.3.4. Conclusion

In summary, the above three forms of the Hua County steamed flower buns are the most representative kinds of steamed flower buns. Their shapes look similar, but they have different detail. (Zhang Xiaojuan 2012) noted that these three types of steamed flower buns represent different customs in the three regions. The millet volume represents eastern Hua County, the dish of steamed flower buns represent west of Hua County and other simple shapes can represent the tableland. On the other hand, (Liu, Han and Li 2014) believe that the steamed flower bun is a local specialty, but the form is relatively simple. It uses many traditional colours, but there are no classic iconic works on which it is based.

Compared with Yanchuan patchwork, the traditional Chinese symbols in Hua County steamed flower buns have been performed more directly and overtly. The structures of both Yanchuan patchwork and Hua County steamed flower buns are related to the philosophy of Chinese and of Yin and Yang. Most of these works pursue the balanced composition forms, and the symbols have a one-to-one correspondence. However, this mode of composition is less-known by the young generation and designers; they usually focus on whether the appearance looks like the so-called Chinese style but ignore the deeper meanings of the traditional Chinese symbols. This problem merits the attention of people from different regions and countries.

4.4 Transfer of Masters to their family members: a Deep Field Study in Yanchuan County

The Northern part of Shaanxi Province has its unique local features; it is not only the central part of the Loess Plateau but also an old revolutionary base area. The terrain in the northwest area is higher than the southeast area, and the total area is 92521.4 square kilometres. The main interviewees in this field study are Gao Fenglian's family members, some relevant artists and local government; therefore, we have a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of Yanchuan patchwork through the interviews conducted with these three groups of people. This field study will also answer the research question of what the specific denotation and connotation of the symbols in

Yanchuan patchwork are and how patchwork artists can transfer their skills to new generations in their family. The image below shows the research road map of this field study.



Figure 4-27. Road map of field study 2

Length of time: 21 Days (08/02/2016 to 28/02/2016)

Road map: Xi'an - Tongguan – Yichuan – Yan'an – Yanchuan – Xi'an.

Research area: Yanchuan patchwork of Gao Fenglian's family and surrounding environments.

4.4.1. Purpose

This field study was conducted for more than 20 days in the Northern part of Shaanxi Province, and the main research site is in Yanchuan County. There are fore purposes of this field study. The first one is to conduct a deeper investigation on the Yellow River basin and surrounding environment to

know more about the living environment and the creative environment of folk artists. The second purpose is to experience the local atmosphere of Luna New Year and Chinese Lantern Festival and record what do local people do on these days because people used to decorate their homes with traditional paper cuttings and New Year pictures and to participate in some special activities during these important festivals. The third purpose is to first gain the trust from Gao Fenglian and her family by introducing the research significance and then to conduct a more thorough data collection on Yanchuan patchwork of Gao's family through taking pictures and video records. Last but not least, the study aims to establish stronger relationships with local folk artists through meaningful communication with them. More first-hand data was collected, and all the collected data will be used in semiotic analysis and culture-based design innovation experiments, which will be described next chapter.

4.4.2. Summary of activities and process

4.4.2.1. Environment around the Yellow River basin



Figure 4-28. The natural scenery and living environment near the Yellow River basin.

In cities located on the route to Yanchuan County, such as Tongguan City and Yichuan City, which are close to the Yellow River, local people still maintain the original lifestyle of the country-side: they live in cave houses, plough their farmland by traditional methods such as raise; and decorate their windows and doors with paper cutting works and patchworks. The cave house is an ancient dwelling endemic to the Northwest Loess Plateau. Its history can be traced back more than four thousand years. In the region of Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia, the loess layer is very thick; in some places, it is as thick as tens of kilometres. Because of such special geographical features, local residents were able to construct buildings that are warm in winter and cool in summer. In recent years, many researchers from China and abroad started to conduct studies on cave houses. Cave houses are the product of the Loess Plateau and heritage of the people in northern Shaanxi. They embody the rich culture of the ancient loess. However, with the rapid economic development, increasingly more cave houses have been abandoned; researchers have appealed to local people to record how they built these cave houses to transfer this cultural heritage to the next generation.

4.4.2.2. Custom of the Yellow River basin: Yangko

In Yan'an city, some festive activities are taking place. Yangko, for example, is a kind of group folk dance with various forms. It is a continuation of an ancient sacrifice ceremony. People from the northern part of Shaanxi

Province used to dance Yangko as a prayer for jollification in the next year. This custom begins on January 1st of the Chinese Lunar Calendar each year and is maintained for nearly the entire month. As people dance Yangko, different groups of dancers will have different theme and will compete with each other in front of audiences. We observed that each of the male Yangko dancers placed a towel on his head, as their ancestors would do when working in the fields. People are using this way to remember what they have accomplished and to remind themselves that without the hard work of the past, there is no current beautiful life.



Figure 4-29. People dancing Yangko in Yan'an city centre.

4.4.2.3. Custom of the Yellow River basin: Turn the nine corners

Another activity, 'turn the nine corners' (转九曲), is held on January 15th of the Chinese Lunar calendar during the Lantern Festival; it is an ancient custom in the northwest region of Shaanxi Province. This traditional custom is inseparable with local religious beliefs. It is a kind of folk sacrificial activity in which people seek blessings from the gods to eliminate disasters and provide family safety, bumper grain harvests and happiness. The place where 'turn the nine corners' is held is usually in a large plaza, where local

people will build a large formation with 367 pillars divided by nine areas of footpaths. The highest pillar is in the middle of the maze of pillars, and when people reach it, they jump to reach the top of the pillar or as high as they can. The distance they reach represents how prosperous their lives will be in the new year. The shape of the maze is likened to the winding Yellow River, and it is also a variation of the Taoist Tai Chi diagram, which includes a large Tai Chi Diagram and nine small Tai Chi diagrams.

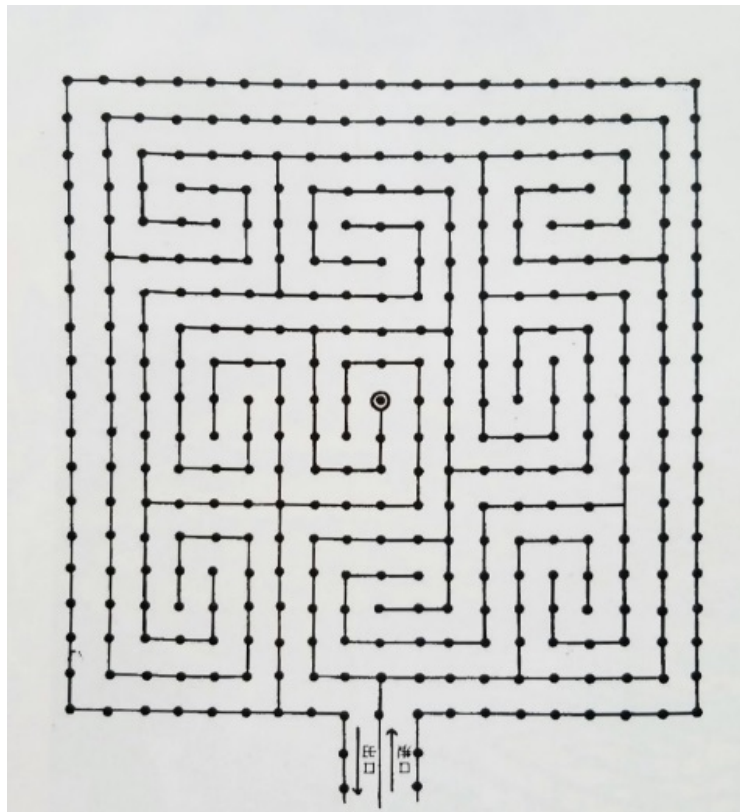


Figure 4-30. Diagram of 'Turn the nine corners'



Figure 4-31. Picture of 'Turn the nine corners'

(source: http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_1506918540102xdri.html)

4.4.2.4. Environment of Yanchuan County

In Yanchuan County, some people still live in cave houses; there is no shopping centre, but the market is close to the Xiuyan River. Although the material life of local residents is relatively antiquated, their spiritual life is rich. Because many people in Yanchuan can create paper cuttings, the local government has renovated some bridges on the Xiuyan River by including carvings of many paper cutting works of local people, among which are works created by Gao Fenglian's family. In the centre part of Yanchuan County, there is a large plaza named Xiangyong Plaza, in which the local government has built a huge background wall including carvings of one of Gao Fenglian's paper cutting works. This work is highly symbolic, and it depicts a dragon taking off. The dragon in the picture represents the Yellow River; therefore, metaphor of this work is the rapid development of the

Yellow River regions. In the main street of Yanchuan County, there are many propaganda posters that promote the local folk artists and their works; everyone in the county knows the names Gao Fenglian, Feng Shanyun, Liu Jieqiong and so on. They called them the masters of folk art.



Figure 4-32. Cave houses in Yanchuan



Figure 4-33. Bridge on the Xiuyan River



Figure 4-34. Gao Fenglian's work on the Xiang Yong Plaza.

4.4.2.5. In-depth contact with Gao Fenglian and her family

4.4.2.5.1 Previous cave house of Gao Fenglian's family

About ten minutes' walk from Gao Fenglian's art museum, Liu Jieqiong's husband, Wang Wei, brought the author to the previous cave house of Gao Fenglian's family. This place has been abandoned for many years and cannot be inhabited any more. The old cave house includes 3 rooms. In front of the doors, there is a large stone mill, a stable, some large water vats and a pigpen. Gao Fenglian and her family had lived there for many decades; it can be seen that the family life they had lived before was that of an ordinary peasant life. It was here that Geo Fenglian learnt paper cutting and patchwork all by her talent.



Figure 4-35. The previous cave houses of Gao Fenglian's family

4.4.2.5.2 Current situation of Gao Fenglian

Thanks to Gao Fenglian's daughter, Liu Jieqiong, the author has been to Gao's cave house and celebrated the Lantern Festival together with her family. It was very unfortunate that Gao had been injured before we met her, as it was very inconvenient to interview her because she had to lie on her bed the entire time. Due to the poor medical conditions in rural areas, the doctor must visit the mountain where Gao Fenglian's cave house is located to conduct fluids intravenously and prescribe medications to her. On the positive side, because we visited during the New Year period, many of her family members, such as her sons and daughters-in-law and her grandsons, return home from other cities to get together with their extended family. All of these people work together to prepare food and decorate the house, as well as to experience the atmosphere of the country-side.



Figure 4-36. Gao Fenglian was lying on this bed during the interview

4.4.2.5.3 Customs in Gao Fenglian's family

Because the Lunar New Year is one of the most important festival in China, the family members of Gao Fenglian have decorated many things related to Chinese Feng Shui and worship of gods in Gao's cave house. In Chinese Feng Shui, the locations for worshipping the different gods are very important. For instance, people used to worship the God of Wealth in the two sides of the room but not facing the door. Therefore, a paper cutting of the god of wealth can be found on the wall of Gao Fenglian's bedroom. Some other representative paper cutting works can also be found in and out of Gao's cave house, such as the zodiac animal of the coming New Year and auspicious flowers, and some calligraphic brief notes can be found almost everywhere on the wall and doors. The old works will be removed after they have deteriorated, and new works will replace them in the coming New Year.

Another example that has been found is the Kitchen God below. People used to remove the old paper cutting of the Kitchen God on December 23 and replace it with a new one on December 24 of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. They believe that the Kitchen God will report all the things they have done in the past year to the Jade Emperor, who supervises everything from the heaven. Therefore, they put the paper cutting or painted Kitchen God near the hearth in order to provide good foods to him so that he will report good things and forget bad things. During the Chinese New Year period, people will especially put some sweet food in front of the Kitchen God for the same reason. These

kinds of customs can still be found but are disappearing gradually in both cities and the country-side in China, it is because the long-term development of traditional Chinese thinking is being replaced by advanced technology and science. It was fortunate that these small artifacts can still be found in Gao Fenglian's cave house.

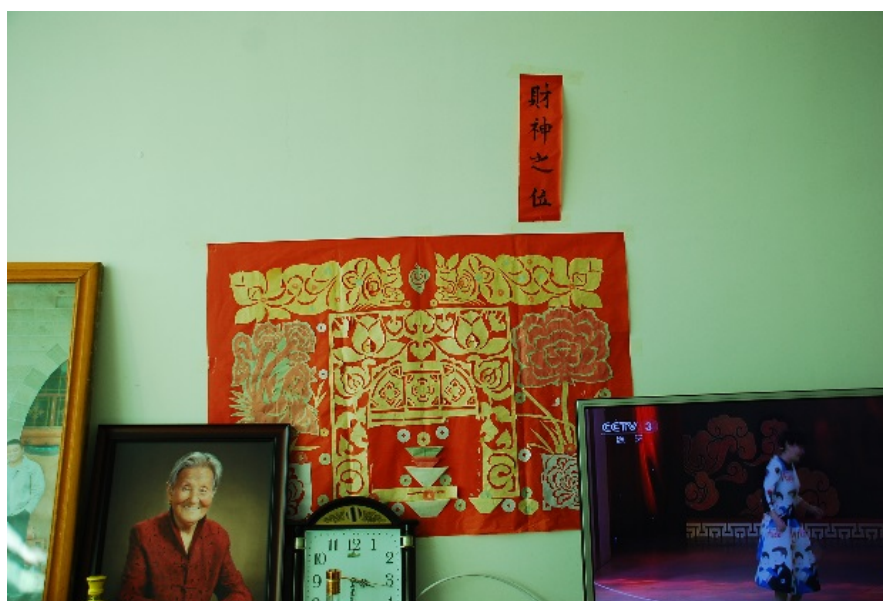


Figure 4-37. Paper cutting work of the God of Wealth by Gao Fenglian



Figure 4-38. Paper cutting work of the Kitchen God by Gao Fenglian

4.4.2.5.4 Data collection of the patchworks of Gao Fenglian's family

During her stay, the author introduced the research purpose and research significance to Gao's family and earned their trust. All the patchworks in Gao Fenglian's home that were made by Gao Fenglian, Liu Jieqiong and Fan Rongrong were recorded for research purposes; this was not an easy task because it involved copyright issues of these artists. It was unfortunate that there many works that they have already given to others such as the National Art Museum and personal collections. Gao's daughter, Liu Jieqiong, has recorded most of the works and will provide the pictures to the author as necessary.

4.4.2.5.5 Discussion on Culture-Based Design Innovation

A discussion about culture-based design innovation was conducted with Gao Fenglian and Liu Jieqiong, and they had different opinions. Gao is a rural woman whose works are full of imagination; she has no concept of design at all, and she would like to explain the stories upon which her works are based than think about how to cooperate with designers. On the other hand, her daughter, Liu, thinks differently. In the past decades, Liu has been to many big cities both in China and abroad for exhibitions or some exchange activities; this made her perspective much wider than that of her mother. In 2012, she had made a series of paper cutting combs using some small pieces of red paper. She said that she made these works subconsciously, but after she

finished them, something new came out of her mind: why not make this series of paper cutting combs into real combs? Liu is not wealthy, and she hopes to make some products through culture-based innovation to improve the lives of her family. The author believes that this is an expression of Liu's creative consciousness and protection awareness. However, some researchers believe that culture-based design innovation such as combined traditional elements with modern products is not a good way to protect the original art forms. For example, (Zhu Liang 2014) has indicated two viewpoints: first, commodity is not the pursuit of folk art, and the excessive commercialization will make folk art give way of industrialization, eliminating the cultural context of this art and losing the spirituality and emotionality of folk art itself; second, he believes that symbolism is a shallow cognition of folk culture, as the use of folk art symbols should be treated only as a method of modern art or modern design. Aesthetic character and inherited cognitive philosophy, combined with the spirit of the time, is the right way to truly achieve the development and innovation of Chinese culture.

4.4.2.5.6 Findings on traditional proverbs

Another important finding in Gao Fenglian's home is that when Gao introduced her patchworks, she talked about local proverbs in the Yanchuan dialect. Almost all the themes of her patchworks are related to these proverbs. These proverbs include 'if the fish plays on the lotus, the couple will have a

happy life’, ‘when a man sits on peonies and a woman sits on a lotus, the Eight Immortals will send a shoe-shaped silver ingot to them’, and ‘if there is a one chayote and nine pomegranates, the children will never leave their mother. The pronunciation of these proverbs in the original dialect is very rhyming. Women in Gao Fenglian’s family all know these proverbs very well; some of them have been summarized, and the author has recorded others, as well. The objects such as fish and lotus in these proverbs are closely related to the philosophy of Chinese primitivism of Yin and Yang. These proverbs are the clues that connect the creations of the three generations of Gao Fenglian’s family; all of those proverbs contain the deep life meanings and local people’s expectations of their lives. Because these artists have these beliefs in their hearts, they can create such special works. The collected proverbs can be found in the Appendix 3 in Chinese.

4.4.2.6. In-depth contact with Liu Jieqiong

Gao Fenglian’s daughter Liu Jieqiong helped us considerably during the entire research project. She provided necessary information and helped make connections with other relevant researchers and local folk artists. Liu is now making a large patchwork in her home, which depicts life in the country-side and includes some local people’s religions. This work will take her approximately 3 months to finish; all the people in this work have their own stories, and all the elements have their own meanings. Liu has provided the

author some articles written by herself; the topics of these articles are paper cutting and patchworks made by herself and her family. Most of these articles have been published by famous publishing houses such as the People's Daily and the Guangming Daily. She sometimes feels inferior because she only has a high school diploma and she thinks her writing is not as good as other highly educated authors. However, after reading her articles, most people think she has a great talent for writing. Her writing is full of passion for life; the language is simple but very vivid and contagious.



Figure 4-39. Liu Jieqiong's home and her large patchwork

During the time we visited Liu Jieqiong's home, she invited some local patchwork artists to her home. They brought different styles of patchworks that were made by themselves; some of their works were about mythical creatures, and some were about the country life. The difference between those local patchwork artists and Liu Jieqiong is that when they were introducing their works, they could only describe what kind of things they had made but

provide no deeper meanings. Some auspicious meanings and wishes for better life could be found in these works, but they are limited to the aesthetic level. Even though their works are very colourful and look beautiful, if these artists want to make a breakthrough, they need to convey the philosophical implications of their works. In ancient times, the purpose of rural women making patchwork was to make their clothes more beautiful or just to kill time, but currently, in Yanchuan, the purpose for most rural women is to make patchwork and paper cutting for commercial purposes to improve their life. If the artists can combine their life and works at a higher level, they can then achieve real success.



Figure 4-40. Liu Xiaojuan's patchwroks

4.4.2.7. Visit and Learn

Patchwork can be seen as a combination of paper cutting and embroidery. In the remaining days of our visit, Liu Jieqiong introduced Liu Yanqin, who can make patchwork well, and Hao Lianying, an old woman from Yanchuan County who used to do embroidery very well. She also provided the contact

information of Mr. Zhang Xiangrong, who is the director of the Yanchuan Human Resources and Social Security Bureau of Yanchuan Government.



Figure 4-41. Visiting in Liu Yanqin's cave house and her patchworks

4.4.2.7.1 Visit in Hao Lianying's home

Hao Lianying was born in 1936, and she is now living in Yanchuan County. She loves folk art in her whole life and can do both paper cutting and embroidery very well. Her son, Cheng Andong, wrote a book about her, titled 'My Mother', in 2015 to record her folk art works for commemoration. In her works, we find 'fish playing with lotus' and 'pomegranate and peony', which can also be found in Gao Fenglian's patchworks. These older artists have similar expectations of their life, and their works can fully reflect the "Sheng-sheng" idea, which will be explained in Chapter 5.



Figure 4-42. Visiting in Hao Lianying's home and her embroidery works.

4.4.2.7.2 Visit in Nianpan Village

The Nianpan Folk Culture Museum is located in Nianpan Village, Yanchuan County, Shaanxi Province. It was built in 2004 by the Yellow River Original Ecological and Cultural Protection Development Association and local villagers. It was also supported by the American Ford Foundation and the Yanchuan Government. There are more than twenty thousand pieces in curation and more than three thousand pieces on display. The completion of Nianpan Folk Culture Museum has promoted the project application of the national level 'Yellow River Original Culture Protection' and 'Geological Park' programs. It has now already become a nationwide Yellow River original culture protection point and national geological part protection area. In the early 21st century, Professor Jin Zhilin from Central Academy of Fine

Arts found this abandoned village when he came to the region to paint. He looked around for help and organized the support needed to build this museum. Finally, he obtained support from the American Ford Foundation and the Yanchuan Government. The local villagers utilized the abandoned Nianpan Village to exhibit their farming culture that had been remained unchanged for thousands of years. It is prepared, managed and benefited all by themselves. To present the rural life more vividly, the exhibits have been divided into 18 different series, such as history, transportation, diet, spinning and farming, folk customs, folk art, and original religion. The Management Committee is composed of administrative village leaders and the Yellow River Original Ecological and Cultural Protection Development Association, and it has a strict management system governed by regulations. This folk culture museum fully displays the daily necessities of life for local people and is a reflection on the rich cultural value of the Yanchuan area.





Figure 4-43. The Nianpan Folk Culture Museum.

4.4.2.7.3 Visit in Yanchuan County Government

By appointment of Mr. Zhang Xiangrong, the author visited the office of the Yanchuan Human Resources and Social Security Bureau of the Yanchuan Government. He briefly introduced the current situation of Yanchuan County and introduced various art and cultural activities organized by Yanchuan government in recent years, such as singing competitions and Yangko competitions. It can be seen that the government has vigorously promoted their local culture and supports it.

There are two main methods through which the government protects local folk handicrafts: first of all, through vigorous publicity programs directed to the public so that increasingly more people can understand the art of folk handicrafts in Yanchuan County, and second, to encourage the creation of patchwork and paper cutting, the government used to hold competitions and training classes with the local Women's Federation and Culture Federation. Gao Fenglian, Liu Jieqiong, Feng Shanyun and Guo Rulin have been invited to be the tutors of those training classes. In these training classes, hundreds

of local people have cultivated these arts, and some of them have already achieved self-support through paper cutting and patchwork.



Figure 4-44. Visiting in Yanchuan County Government

4.4.3. Results

This long-term field study consists of three parts: First, investigation of living environment of patchwork artists in Yanchuan and the folk traditions and customs in the surrounding area; Second, deep communication with representative patchwork artists and collection of their works and visiting other related artists; and Third, learning about local advocacy methods and protection measures for Yanchuan patchwork.

(Zhou Lu 2011) has noted that due to the natural occlusion of the northern Shaanxi Province and less influence from foreign cultures, the independent and complete loess culture was preserved and continued. Through this long-term field study, author has obtained some insights, through the in-depth communication with local artists, author has deepened the cognition of Yanchuan patchwork from the appearance to the connotation and has found a way to cooperate with the artists, hoping that this art form could be better

protected and developed through different method such as design and propagandize. The birth of Yanchuan patchwork has a direct connection with the local cultural background and geographical features. The ancient traditional Chinese culture has been preserved well in this closed area, and the connotative totems were therefore handed down along with the folk art such as patchwork and paper cutting. Thus, it is also important to protect the living environment of those folk artists. This series of investigations has resolved part of the research aims by providing more communication with patchwork artists, through which clearer specific connotations and denotations were gained about the traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan patchwork, and by facilitating further understanding of how folk art masters can transfer their skills and spirit to younger generations.

Through these three aspects of the research, a more comprehensive understanding of the status of Yanchuan patchwork has been established. However, there are still some areas that need improvement to protect this kind of traditional craft in the future.

4.5 Transferring the wisdom of the masters to new generations: an observation on the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Education Summer Camp

4.5.1. Introduction

The Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Education Summer Camp has also

been named the Whampoa Military Academy of Paper Cutting. In 2015, there were over 50 students from 22 provinces in total; some of them were awarded the first-class Master of Arts and Crafts at the provincial level, some of them were inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, and some were professors or associate professors and researchers. The research question of how folk artists can transfer their skills to new generations will be fully answered in this section.

Objectives of this Summer Camp:

- 1) To implement the spirit of the youths on the intangible cultural heritage education from the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education.
- 2) To training teachers' intangible cultural quality.
- 3) To improve the education programs incorporating traditional Chinese arts and handicrafts in schools and cultural sectors.
- 4) To promote Chinese traditional culture.

Organizers:

- 1) Nanjing University Cultural and Natural Heritage Institute.
- 2) Shanghai Houteng Cultural Communication Co., Ltd.
- 3) Nanjing Xiaozhuang College.
- 4) Jiangsu Fine Arts Publishing House.

Training Content:

- 1) General Background of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage.

- 2) Appreciation of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- 3) Application of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- 4) Traditional folk art skills training (paper cutting, origami, patchwork, blue calico, clay sculpture, printing and dyeing, flower buns, Chinese knots).

Teachers:

- 1) Chen Jing (Deputy Director and Professor of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural Heritage Institute; the original founder, executive vice president and secretary general of the Chinese folk Paper Cutting Research Institute; Member of the Jiangsu Intangible Heritage Protection Expert Committee.)
- 2) He Yunao (Director, professor and PhD supervisor of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural Heritage Institute; Member of the Jiangsu Intangible Heritage Protection Expert Committee.)
- 3) Wu Yuanxin (The Nantong Blue Calico Museum Curator, National Intangible Heritage Inheritor; National Arts and Crafts Master; Chinese ADPL vice chairman)
- 4) Wang Hongchuan (Professor of the Art School of the Inner Mongolia Science and Technology University; Distinguished Teacher of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural Heritage Institute.)

- 5) Guo Rulin (First-Class Arts and Crafts Master in Shaanxi Province;
Distinguished Teacher of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural
Heritage Institute.)
- 6) Tian Yali (Third-Class Arts and Crafts Master in Shaanxi Province;
Distinguished Teacher of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural
Heritage Institute.)
- 7) Wang Jihong (Associate Professor of the Shandong Zibo Teachers
Arts School; Distinguished Teacher of the Nanjing University Culture
and Natural Heritage Institute.)
- 8) Sun Huageng (Associate Professor of Nanjing Xiaozhuang College;
Distinguished Teacher of the Nanjing University Culture and Natural
Heritage Institute.)

Training Methods:

Combination of theoretical knowledge, practice, communication and
investigation. Visiting and inspecting the Nanjing Folk Museum and
so on.

Enrolment: 50 people

Venue: Nanjing Xiaozhuang College

Training Time: 24/07/2015 --- 01/08/2015

4.5.2. Purpose & Objectives

Purpose:

This summer camp has been selected because its main purpose is to teach people the skills of paper cutting and some other kinds of folk art, and it is highly relevant to the research of Yanchuan patchwork. It will not only explain and exhibit traditional cultural folk art but also include training components: teaching and learning how to make these kinds of traditional folk art, which is highly crucial for protecting them. Through interactions with experts and other students, the author gained a more comprehensive way to understand the context of this art and could also take a closer perspective to observe and understand the unclarified factors, which is essential to the research. Such opportunity could be gained only through intensive workshops or summer camps such as this one.

The other purpose of this summer camp is to cultivate participants with knowledge of Chinese intangible cultural heritages and then ask them to impart the knowledge to younger generations. The past eight summer camps were mostly focused on paper cutting, but this time, the range has been expanded to include more other kinds of traditional folk art, such as Chinese knots and blue calico. By studying this summer camp, the author will also observe how can those skills of traditional Chinese folk art be transferred and inherited. These summer camps of Nanjing University have already cultivated many outstanding teachers, and they have been used to spread their skills all over the world. The training method will be a combination of theory, skills, learning and discussion.

Objectives:

1. To gain a better understanding of traditional folk art.
2. To observe the current ways of cultivating students' ability to produce and inherit traditional folk art.
3. To collect first-hand data on experts' experience of teaching traditional folk art.
4. To collect first-hand data on students' experience of learning traditional folk art.

4.5.3. Summary of Activities & Process**4.5.3.1. Insight from the Presentation by Professor Chen Jing: Protecting Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage and confronting existing problems**

The first presentation was by Professor Chen Jing, and the title was 'Protecting Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage and confronting existing problems. China is a big country with a large number of intangible cultural heritages. However, there are many challenges and problems that should trigger people's concern about this heritage. During the presentation of Chen, some problems of protecting Chinese intangible cultural heritages were outlined.

- 1) The first problem is that local governments and inheritors of intangible cultural heritages devote most of their attention to declaration but

ignore protection. This problem has occurred not only in regions or counties but also in the whole range of China; the origin of this problem is the different purposes of declaration in different regions. For example, the purpose of some regions is to develop their tourism; some regions aim to compare upward than others and this phenomenon may help local officers gain achievements in their official career. To get the target, some people even use fake information of history and exaggerated documents; this problem has brought much inconvenience to the staffs of protection departments.

- 2) The second problem is the abilities of intangible cultural heritage protectors are not equal. This might be the key problem directly impacting the schedule and quality of protection works. Some protectors and materials from the Grassroots Ministry of Culture have been redeployed from other resources; some of them are even protected by the Army. It is difficult to continue the protection of cultural works because these people have not enough knowledge of traditional Chinese culture; experts are also scarce in relevant departments. Although some universities have started cultivating researchers on intangible cultural heritages such as Peking University and Central Academy of Fine Arts, it is still not enough to meet the demand for relevant positions. Thus, we have to arouse the attention of the education sectors on the cultivation of young researchers.

- 3) The third problem is the blind development of cultural innovation. The traditional skills have to be kept in the cultural innovation; otherwise, the innovative products are similar to trees without roots. The art form of intangible cultural heritages can be changed, but the contents, spirits and skills should not be ignored.
- 4) The last problem is the education problem. Many schools have held intangible cultural heritage exhibitions and workshops, but most of the results were unsatisfactory. There are two reasons for this phenomenon: first, the organizers payed most of their attention to the display and layout but ignored spreading relevant knowledge to students; second, when students learn the skills of folk art, they normally copy the original works directly without thinking and without developing their imagination.

Solving the problems above will be a long-term work; it needs courage and strategy. For relevant researchers, their responsibility is huge, and they should dedicate their knowledge and power to the protection of the precious intangible cultural heritages through effective methods.

4.5.3.2. Insight from the Presentation by Professor Wei Liqun: The protection and application of the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage

The concept and some policies and regulations of the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage have been introduced in this presentation by Professor Wei.

Many people may be confused about why we called the material clay figurine an intangible cultural heritage. Although, the clay figurine is tangible material, the intangible cultural heritage refers to the conception, process and skills of creating that object. Over the years, there has been a certain deviation of our understanding of culture; people have tended to pay attention to the material aspects of culture and have neglected the spirit and value of intangible cultural heritage. Thus, some high-level cultural artefacts such as palaces and religious objects have been described in detail by Chinese literati, but folk objects have rarely been documented. The State Council first issued the concept of protecting Chinese intangible cultural heritage in 2005. Currently, China has become the world's largest UNESCO-listed country of intangible cultural heritage projects. There are various significant reasons for protecting Chinese intangible cultural heritage. Intangible cultural heritage is the essence of national culture and a symbol of national wisdom. It is a carrier of the national spirit reflection, and it may also enhance social cohesion and promote national unity.

The requirements of declaration of the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage are that the subject of the project should be endangered, and it needs to have had over one hundred years of history. It also has to been passed down for more than three successive generations. The successful example of the Shanghai puppet is given as an example to demonstrate the ways to resolve problems and to outline the application process. Before applying for a

declaration of the Chinese Intangible cultural heritage, the applicant should make sure it is a traditional handicraft not a current industrial craft and have a deep understanding of from where the handicraft originates, how it was inherited from earlier generations, and what its cultural orientation is. For any cultural heritage, applicants who wish to declare it should pay attention to its history, evolution and how it is inherited from its pedigree.

4.5.3.3. Workshops of intangible cultural heritages

After the presentation section, some workshops of intangible cultural heritages such as paper cutting and patchwork were conducted by different masters. All the masters provided detailed teaching contents at first, and then some pictures were shown and basic skills were taught to students. The professional teaching materials were prepared well, and all the masters were very patient about answering our questions. The list below shows the sequence of all the workshops in this summer camp.

- The skills of Chinese paper cutting without drawing on the back. (Guo Rulin)
- The skills of folded Chinese paper cutting. (Guo Rulin)
- Practicing Chinese paper cutting without drawing on the back. (Guo Rulin)
- Practicing folded Chinese paper cutting. (Guo Rulin)
- The skills and practice of making paper flowers. (Sun Huageng)

- The skills and practice of making steamed flower buns. (Tian Yali)
- The creation of Chinese lucky paper cutting. (Xu Yang)
- The skills and practice of making Chinese knots. (Sun Huageng)
- The skills and practice of colorized paper cutting and collage. (Guo Rulin)
- The creation and application of Chinese paper cutting. (Tian Yali)
- The skills and practice of three-dimensional paper cutting. (Xiang Liangjing)
- The creation and application of the Chinese paper cutting. (Tian Yali)

4.5.3.4. Visit and Learn

4.5.3.4.1 The Chinese Gold Foil Art Gallery

Chinese gold foil is a kind of Chinese intangible cultural heritage. There are two parts to the Gold Foil Art Gallery: the main exhibition room and the processing workshop. The main exhibition room displays many gold foil works such as sculptures, accessories and large devices. One staff member demonstrated the skill of how to apply gold foil onto a clay sculpture. The processing workshop is very large, and all the workers are seated one by one. Each of them is in charge of one job. A complete process of making gold foil was performed in front of us. The protective measure of intangible cultural heritage in this gallery is to combine exhibition and visible workshop to audience; this could also be an appropriate way for the publicity and

promotion of Chinese intangible cultural heritage.



Figure 4-45. The workshop in the Chinese Gold Foil Art Gallery

4.5.3.4.2 The Nanjing Folk Museum

Nanjing Folk Museum is a comprehensive museum that was established in the historic site of Gan's Grand Courtyard in 1992 and located in the Baixia District of Nanjing City. The main exhibitions include the comprehensive display of Nanjing intangible cultural heritages, exhibitions and studios of representative inheritors, display of history of Gan's family, art exhibition of Nanjing traditional marriage and parenting customs and so on. Most of the show rooms implement advanced multimedia technology to encourage interaction and participation between visitors and local folk masters. Visitors can not only enjoy the elegance and refinement of traditional residential buildings but can also experience the culture of profound Nanjing folk culture, as well as take a close appreciate of representative inheritors' performances. The combination of intangible cultural heritage and tourism industry could also be a viable protection measure.



Figure 4-46. The folk art studios in the Nanjing Folk Museum

4.5.3.4.3 The Nantong Blue Calico Museum

Nantong Blue Calico Museum was established by the Chinese Arts and Crafts master Wu Yuanxin in 1997. It is a professional museum that includes collection, exhibition, research, production and operation facilities. The blue calico art institutes, the workshop of blue calico from Ming and Qing Dynasty and the blue calico tourism product development department have insisted on the purpose of protecting intangible cultural heritage and carrying forward the tradition of making blue calico products. Visitors can observe and take part in the process of making blue calico products to know the details of the skill and learn relevant knowledge from it. Combining museum and workshops in the Nantong Blue Calico Museum may be a tourism strategy for protecting this kind of intangible cultural heritage.



Figure 4-47. The Nantong Blue Calico Museum

4.5.4. Results

This Intangible Cultural Heritage Summer Camp is very significant, as it answers the research question of how folk artists transfer their knowledge and skills to new generations. This transfer of knowledge and skill was observed for 8 days, during which the theoretical knowledge and professional skills of teachers of different kinds of Chinese intangible cultural heritages, all of whom are famous in their field of folk art, were conveyed. By the patient teaching of the teachers, students achieved their own method of creating paper cuttings, patchwork and so on. Through the understanding of the origin and development of intangible cultural heritages, all the students realized the importance of protecting these heritages. The three gallery and museums have informed us that the strategies of protecting intangible cultural heritage to be effective, they have to involve three important point: first the sufficient fundamental knowledge of the protecting object; second, having sufficient help and support from the local government; and third, learning from successful paradigms and transcending them through innovation.

In relation to the research question of how to improve the awareness of designers to protect Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation, the most basic requirement is that they need to first understand the related knowledge and skills of this heritage. Some professors have noted that cultural innovation is one of the protection methods; it may help both the artists and designers and make the handicrafts into a sustainable development. However, more anthropological studies are needed, especially the current situation of how artists and designers should cooperate. During these eight days, the author has observed much about the transmission of the knowledge and skills of different folk arts. It might be a good way to conduct some relevant courses in design schools or art schools in order to protect and transfer the disappearing intangible cultural heritages to new generations.

4.5.5. Summary

In conclusion, the case studies above have some main findings that reflect the research questions on ‘what are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan patchwork?’ and ‘how do folk artists transfer their skills to new generations?’ In the first and third case studies, a deep investigation of Yanchuan patchwork has been conducted, and the denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan patchwork have been explained through local artists and their family members. The second case study compared the difference between Yanchuan

patchwork and the Hua County steamed flower buns. The third case study has shown how the Chinese folk artists transfer their skills to others step-by-step through a participated observation by the author. The detailed analysis of symbols will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION OF THE SYMBOLS AND THEIR MEANINGS IN YANCHUAN PATCHWORK

5.1 Analysis of frequently used symbols in Yanchuan Patchwork

Traditional Chinese symbols and patterns have a wide variety of combinations and colours. (Han Binghua 2004) notes that this variety stems from the craftsmen who dye and embroider fabric and create ceramics for daily use, woodblock prints and various other arts and crafts. These craftsmen have collected many materials from nature and social life, taking forms to create embellished objects and images. Then, they translate these forms through the use of lines, block surfaces, structures and the combination of colours to make real and abstract works. Therefore, they have lived with a great variety of artistic images. Many scholars have summarized three utilitarian tendencies related to the rich content and diverse forms of Chinese folk art: they are ‘pray for a child and the extension of life’, ‘pray for wealth and fortune’ and ‘frighten away evil and plagues’, as identified by (Lv Pintian 2007). Many traditional Chinese symbols can thus be found in Yanchuan patchwork as well, the shape of these symbols can be roughly divided into animals, humans, plants, and articles of daily use. Although there are already many researchers look at the meanings of the symbols in

traditional Chinese cultures, it is still necessary for author to investigate the meanings of symbols in Yanchuan patchworks because they have specific meanings in this region which has not been described by others. Thus, this chapter will focus on one of the research questions: what are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in Yanchuan patchwork?

5.1.1. Category of Animals

Using the patchworks of Gao Fenglian's family as an example, in the category of animals, they usually use twelve Chinese zodiac animals (mouse, cow, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, chicken, dog, pig), bird, fish, donkey, and bat. All these animals have different auspicious meanings. (Jin Zhilin 1999) mentions that in Gao Fenglian's art works, we can see the accumulation of extremely rich totem culture. The tiger totem in her work represents heaven and the sun of the Yan Emperor tribal group; the bird and phoenix totems also represent heaven and the sun of the Dongyi and Nanman tribe; the dragon, snake and fish totems represent earth and water of the Huang Emperor tribe. These elements in Gao Fenglian's work can reflect the integration and development of multi-ethnic totem culture. The images below are the animals that have been frequently used in the Gao Fenglian family patchworks.



Figure 5.1 Tiger symbol from Gao Fenglian family patchworks.



Figure 5.2 Dragon symbol from Gao Fenglian family patchworks of.



Figure 5.3 Bird, phoenix, Snake and fish symbols from Gao Fenglian family patchworks.

5.1.2. Category of Plants

The auspicious images are closely related to animals and plants. People start from the good wishes of longing for good luck and treat some natural objects as auspicious things and beliefs. They believe that using these natural objects can help prevent disasters, exorcise evil spirits and achieve a happiness life, as stated by (Yu Ying 2010). The frequently used plants in the Gao Fenglian family patchworks are pomegranate, peony, fingered citron, lotus, and red dates. The connotations of these plants are as follows: pomegranate can represent the idea that more children bring increased happiness; peony usually represents the sun and heaven, as well as the desire for high position and great wealth; fingered citron is related to Buddhism, and it can symbolize

safeness and reunion; lotus is also a flower related to Buddhism, and folk artists use lotus to represent female reproductive organs and to pray for more children; red dates are one of the most common plants in the northern part of Shaanxi Province, and red date trees typically grow in sand in very dry climates, so this plant can represent the exuberant vitality and strong spirit of rural people.



Figure 5.4 Pomegranate, peony, fingered citron and lotus symbols

5.1.3. Category of Articles of daily life

Another category that can be found in the Gao Fenglian family patchwork is articles of daily life. People always say that art comes from life and is higher than life. These articles used by people every day, but artists give them deeper

meanings. For instance, the candlestick usually appears in the art theme of god of wealth, which means strong incense and a steady stream of wealth. The millstone is closely related to food and life., Liu Jieqiong points out that the main body of the millstone has two parts, which represent male and female or Yin and Yang. When it is working, it will always rotate clockwise like a moving Tai Chi Diagram. The mirror symbol can be found in God of wealth's head as well. In ancient Chinese legends, the mirror is a device that can connect Yin and Yang. The coin is a symbol of wealth. In patchwork, artists used to use a lot of coin symbols to decorate the picture. Sometimes, they even created a money tree in their works; this is how they pray for high position and great wealth.



Figure 5-5. Candlestick, millstone, mirror and coin symbols

5.2 Analysis & Discussion of Fan Rongrong's patchwork 'Zhuaji Doll'



Figure 5-6. Fan Rongrong's patchwork 'Zhuaji Doll'.

This work was made by Gao Fenglian's granddaughter Fan Rongrong and this type of Zhuaji Doll is named 'Happy Doll', which represents the procreation God. It is a primitive cultural relic of witchcraft from matriarchal society that females worship to celebrate the procreation God, as concluded

by (Jin, 2001). Observing the shape of this Zhuaji Doll, it is clear that the gender of it is a female because one of the local proverbs points out that males sit on peonies and females sit on a lotus. Her hands are raised and her legs are open as if she is giving birth. She has a combed double hair-bun, wears wreaths, catches two chickens in her hands and steps on two fish. In Chinese pronunciation, “hair-bun” and “chicken” are similar to “lucky”, and represent good wishes from the author. (Zhai Mangan & Zheng Ping 2005) have summarized that the metaphorical and symbolic language, which is based on a farming civilization, was very active in the Chinese expression that created this rich symbolic imagery. However, with the development of commercial society and the popularization of culture, metaphorical symbolic language has declined gradually. This phenomenon has led to the fact that using homonym of language to create a symbolic meaning has become increasingly popular. Fish is a symbol of the god’s animals that have strong reproductive capacity. On the other hand, chicken and fish also represent darkness and brightness: ‘the combination of Yin and Yang produces everything, and everything will continuously reproduce in an endless succession’. These patterns have fully embodied the Chinese philosophical thinking of darkness and brightness and the sheng-sheng idea. Another two chickens appear on the doll’s arms and ears, which shows how strange an idea it is and how strong the desire that Fan Rongrong has. The Zhuaji Doll is sitting on a red lotus. Because there are many seeds in lotus, in China, this flower can also represent that people will

give birth to many children from generation to generation. The lotus pattern has been widespread among people since the introduction of Buddhism during the Han Dynasty (Jin Zhilin 2001). In Buddhism, the red lotus pattern represents female. The translation of the six words “Om ma ni pad me hum” is “the holy red lotus”, which indicates female genitals. (Zhu Liang 2015) has also noted that to highlight the reproductive systems of men and women, artists usually expressed them as a symbolic metaphor but also sometimes directly exaggerating the reproductive organs. This is the people’s reproductive worship and reflects the sheng-sheng idea in the Chinese primitive philosophy as well as the good wishes that people pray for many children. The doll’s chest is decorated with a tiger pattern and a child. The tiger is the king of all the animals, and people believe that it has the strongest power to protect their family and children.

Fan Rongrong’s patchworks are quite delicate because of her superb paper cutting skills. Patchwork, compared to paper cutting, uses cloth instead of paper and then makes the picture look more three-dimensional by attaching the fabrics layer-by-layer. People can also find embroidery as decorative method in the detailed parts of the patchwork. Gao was born in the countryside, and made all her works with her scissors and through her own understanding of her life and local culture and history, combined with her fanciful imagination. These patchworks have unique shapes and are covered in profound philosophical thinking. People can find the worship of the gods

of her faith as well as a love of life and hope in her works. It is her spirit that passes down this traditional Chinese art form from generation to generation.

The colours used in this work are very bold. Gao used red as the background colour, which represents auspiciousness and luck in China. The outline of the doll's body is blue, and two green peony patterns decorate around her eyes. In folk art, the peony is a symbol of the sun, so she uses peonies to decorate the doll's eyes to make them looked bright and piercing. In other parts of the patchwork, she uses dark purple and black as a background, yellow, pink and orange to brighten the work and create a sense of light and shade. This approach makes the whole picture look more abundant, and the sense of depth is more intense.

This work is highly representative. By attaching fabrics layer by layer to provide a strong visual impact, it also produces a special emotion. The use of totem and symbols in this Zhuaji Doll is also very clever and aesthetically pleasing. (Jin Zhilin 1999) has pointed out that the evolution from animal totem to half human half animal totem then to human totem such as this Zhuaji Doll reflects the three stages of development from Matriarchal society to Patriarchal society. This type of traditional work can also provide inspiration for the design of innovative products. For example, scanning patchwork patterns can be integrated into decorative cloths for the home, or scaling through 3D printing could allow the pattern to be made into handicrafts or toys. Through the rapid speed of advanced technology, the

skills and spirits of these soon lost traditional handicraft works will be better preserved and carried forward.

5.3 Analysis of Gao Fenglian's patchwork 'Kitchen God'



Figure 5.7 Gao Fenglian's patchwork 'Kitchen God'.

This patchwork is one of the large patchworks by Gao Fenglian named ‘The Kitchen God’, which is a type of god worship developed from the worship of fire. Kitchen God is a popular theme of paper cutting and patchwork in rural areas, and people create different types of Kitchen God during the lunar New Year and pray for family stability and to live in abundance. According to the description of traditional proverbs, people usually see the Kitchen God on the twenty-third day of the Chinese lunar calendar. Both males and females will read formulas during the rite. For males, they will say to the Kitchen God, “Ride your red horse, open the gate of heaven., it is easy to go to heaven but hard to go back to earth, please only say good words of the mundane world and do not say bad words.” (骑上枣红马, 拨开蓝天门, 上天容易下天难, 只说凡间的好, 不说凡间的歹。) For females, they will say to the Kitchen God, “Women are not human, the goat mother and its child cannot worship to God, if our husbands are not at home, we will instead of them. We boil millet into sugar and put it into Kitchen God’s mouth to make his mouth sweeter and forbid him from talking nonsense. When the Kitchen God opens the gate of heaven, he will only say good words of the mundane world and will not say bad words.” (婆姨人不算人, 山羊母子不敬神, 奴的男人不在家, 奴家的女人顶上他。小米熬成面糖糖, 糊起灶马爷爷的嘴唇唇。灶马的嘴甜丝丝, 上天不能乱说话, 灶马拨开蓝天的门, 只说凡间的好, 不说凡间的歹。)

The production process is very delicate and complex. It has kept both the crafts of stick the fabrics layer by layer and the skill of decorate with a large amount of embroidery. Thus, the picture looks as a whole and full of details. From the overall shape, based on the culture of Han nationality, the composition of this series of works used to be an elderly couple sitting together, which represent the Kitchen God and his wife. The Kitchen God is emphasized in this patchwork as he is much larger than his wife. According to Chinese Primitivism Philosophy, the double dragons on Kitchen God's hair and the double tigers on his ears reflect the thinking of Yin and Yang, which means continuous reproduction in an endless succession. A similar composition can be found on the Kitchen God's beard. Gao has included two pairs, a dragon and phoenix and a cow and bird, on it. The bid chicken in front of the Kitchen God is in terms of Chinese pronunciation 'ji', which has similar meaning to auspicious. The shape of his wife is relatively simple. Gao has also decorated her hair with a pair of chicken totem that can echo the chicken in front of the Kitchen God. She holds a rabbit totem in her arms, which is the representative symbol of the god of reproduction and is a manifestation of reproductive worship. On the right side of the Kitchen God, there is a divine masculine animal: cattle. There are many nations in China who regard the cattle totem as their worship object. People believe that the cattle is the incarnation of a Yan Emperor who has the ability to move mountains and to empty the ocean. The totem on its head is a sun flower,

representing brightness, and the toad totem on its back represents female and darkness. Most of the totems and elements on this patchwork reflect Yin and Yang thinking.

From the colour point of view, to highlight the auspicious red clothes of the Kitchen God and his wife, Gao has chosen dark blue as the background. The selection of the dark colour as the background highlights the figure, and the picture looks more structured. This skilled use of colour is also reflected in the details. For example, the hair and beard of the figure are both black, and then she uses a bright white outline to make them appear richer and more three-dimensional.

In summary, this pair of traditional statues themed work is very common in rural areas, especially during the new year period. It represents the local people's worship of the gods and their desire for a happy life; however, most people who live in the city now think that this is backward, feudal and superstitious behaviour. The precondition for protecting this type of folk art is to respect it; otherwise, it will eventually disappear. It will be a big challenge if this type of traditional art form can combine with modern art and design in people's daily life. First, it is very important to protect the creators of copyright and try different methods to promote their works. However, most local traditional artists are not familiar with such processes and not familiar with developing trends. It is worthwhile to learn from other countries such as Japan, which has used various commercial and non-commercial attempts on

their own development and heritage of traditional crafts. We sincerely hope that these beautiful traditional arts and crafts will not disappear because of nobody heritage or other reasons.

CHAPTER 6 EXPERIMENTS AND EVALUATION: TRANSCEND TO NEW AREA WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY

6.1 Purpose

In order to transform Yanchuan Patchwork to transcendence, it is necessary to combine the newest design technology with the traditional symbols and characteristics of Yanchuan Patchwork. For instance, graphic design is a common form of publicity, such as posters and books. (Hai Jun 2007) believes that modern design is not only a simple marketing tool or production tool, more importantly, it is also an active cultural act and an aesthetic act. On the other hand, (Kong Yi 2017) notes that the development of functionalism has brought a colder and single sensation to product design. It has not only obliterated the features of design but also contributed to the loss of the performance of tradition and the characteristics of national moral education. That is, the design style lacks elements of human emotion and personalization. 3D printing is now very popular in the product design field because of its ability to conveniently transform designers' ideas into real objects. (Kong Yi 2017) has also states that applying 3D printing technology to cultural innovation product design and development can provide more sharing and understanding and also new experience to consumers, thus for them to get closer relationships to cultural heritages and artists. In this chapter,

the author has conducted both graphic design and 3D printing design to verify whether the symbols in Yanchuan Patchwork are for combination with modern design projects and if the design products are acceptable by people. This chapter will reflect one of the research questions on ‘how can the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation be improved?’ After the experiments, an evaluation was conducted in Yanchuan County with local patchwork artists.

6.2 From graphic to graphic design

The first experiment aims to translate Yanchuan Patchwork into graphic design projects through the design software Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Indesign. In this experiment, the author designed a brochure, which can serve as a medium for the promotion of Yanchuan Patchwork. A brochure was selected for this project because the author can design the cover using the symbols of Yanchuan Patchwork and type set the contents, as well as show the original and clear pictures of Yanchuan patchworks.



Figure 6.1 Patchwork Brochure designed by Xue Bai.

There are 26 pages in this brochure, included representative patchworks by Liu Jieqiong, Feng Shanyun, Gao Fenglian and Guo Rulin. The cover of this brochure has two parts: an upper part (1) and a lower part (2). In the upper part, the author has chosen a gradient red for the background colour because red is one of the most representative colours in traditional Chinese folk art and is used to represent luck and happiness. Graphic symbols can also be seen on the upper part of the cover; these symbols were selected from a piece of patchwork entitled “The Door God”, which was made by Gao Fenglian. Historically, the Door God was a god of protection; therefore, the author selected it for the cover and translated those symbols into objective images with some gradient colours. (Ke Hongtu 2004) mentioned that ancient auspicious patterns have been refined through the ages, with elegant style and profound connotations. These patterns have contained the infinite ingenuity of ancient people. If we can maintain the graphic spirit of these patterns and simplify their graphic quality through modern design while retaining most of

their originality, they will inevitably present a new look. To introduce Yanchuan patchwork to both Chinese people and foreigners, the title on the cover is in both English and Chinese. The regular cover is also decorated with objective symbols, and in the middle is a pair of Door Gods, which are original patchworks by Gao Fenglian. In contrast to the upper cover, audiences can see the connection between folk art and modern design.

The first version of this brochure aimed to introduce the four folk artists to design students and some foreign people in Hong Kong. The symbols on the cover of the brochure are all selected from original patchworks and transformed into objective graphic design elements. The limitation of this graphic design experiment is that both the brochure and patchwork are in graphic form, and the visual impact might be not strong enough. It also has difficulty to give out a huge number of brochures to spread knowledge of Yanchuan Patchwork to others. What we can do next is to extend the content in the brochure to include more introductions of the artists along with analysis of their works, as well as some comparison and discussion. On the other hand, it is necessary to conduct different forms of design experiments besides graphic design to identify more possibilities for Yanchuan Patchwork.

6.3 From 2D to 3D

Two different experiments have been conducted and are discussed in this section. Both of these experiments transform traditional folk arts from paper or fabrics into real objects in order to achieve the objective of transcending.

6.3.1. Laser Cutting Combs

The goal of this experiment is to transform a series of 2D paper cut works into laser cut works. In 2012, Liu Jieqiong created a series of paper cut works with comb shapes, which are delicate and beautiful. In the interviews above, Liu told author that she would like to try some commercial corporation to improve her quality of life, but as a rural woman, she has no idea about how to popularize her works and how to corporate with manufacturers. This experiment is the first step, which aims to determine if her works are suitable for transformation into commercial products and to test whether laser cutting is a good option for transformation for paper cutting.



Figure 6.2 The original paper cut works: Combs by Liu Jieqiong & the design document in Adobe Illustrator.

Adobe Illustrator was the main software use to create the outline of the combs, and the author directly copied the shape of Liu's original paper cut combs through the path tool in order to keep the aesthetic and artistic values of the folk-art objects. The materials of this laser cutting experiment are wood board and acrylic board because these are two common materials for making combs. Before laser cutting, a minor modification had to be conducted, such as making the teeth of the combs smoother and enlarging the pictures of the combs into a suitable size. The length of time required to complete the laser cutting was approximately two minutes for each comb.



Figure 6.3 The outcomes of laser cutting combs in wood and acrylic materials.

In summary, both advantages and disadvantage were found in the outcomes. The advantages are as follows: first, the shape and the material of the products are comparable to real combs, it could become a good object of reference before mass production; second, the detailed parts of the original paper cut combs were carefully cut, even the very small parts; thus, the original creation of the artist was retained; third, laser cutting works can be finished in a relatively simple way with fast speed. However, there were still some disadvantages to this experiment. The laser cut combs are not smooth enough and they might scratch people's hands and some small parts may easily break. The shape of some combs is not ergonomic enough, and this aspect will need to be improved in the future. Therefore, the technology of laser cutting can provide designers with a fast model of their works, but it is not a suitable option for mass production.

Folk artists like Liu Jieqiong can first establish a connection with designers and discuss what they want to make. Then, they can confirm details of the product such as shape and materials. It is also necessary for artists to sign a protocol of artists' copyright to avoid the abuse of their works.

6.3.2. God of Wealth Tableware

Before beginning this experiment, we propose some concepts. Through the sketches below, patchwork elements could inspire designers and could also be transformed into new design objects through different methods, such as cloth printing, 3D printing, and ceramic design. 3D Printing is now very popular in different design fields, and in order to attract international audiences and researchers, it might be a feasible media to build relationships between Yanchuan patchwork and modern design projects. (Zhang Nan and Li Fei 2013) pointed out that, after nearly 20 years of exploration, 3D printing technology has made great improvements in printing materials, precision, print speed and other aspects. However, it is worth noting that with the purpose of applying traditional Chinese cultural elements to international design projects, designers should not only be concerned with the surface forms but also with the deep semiotic meanings of these forms.

In this experiment, the author spent two-months learning the 3D software Autodesk Inventor and spent one month testing and designing the relevant products discussed below. Autodesk Inventor is used to make 3D printing

models. It is a professional software that can an exact model with different colours and materials. Yanchuan Patchwork includes variety themes and beautiful colours. Before completing the design, the author drew some sketches, which are included below, and attempted to design some cultural and creative products that can reflect the special characteristics of Yanchuan Patchwork. In these sketches, there are patchwork style headbands, red pouches, tableware, tiles, pen containers and storage boxes. To better integrate traditional folk art with advanced technology, the God of Wealth tableware was finally chosen as the experimental subject for 3D printing.

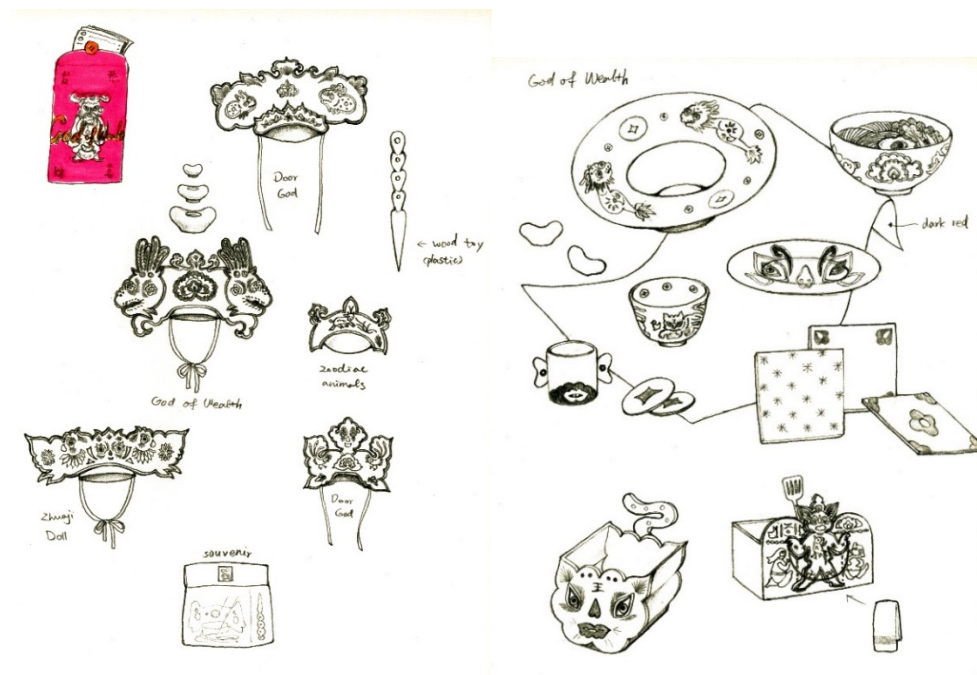


Figure 6.4 Primary sketches of product design works through using patchwork elements.

The God of Wealth tableware selected elements from one of Gao Fenglian's famous patchworks 'God of Wealth', which is pictured below. This theme was selected because in China, people believe that eating is one of the most

important things in their life and that the God of Wealth can also bring happiness and luck to their families. The design concept behind this project was based on the organizing rule of Yin and Yang, Heaven and Earth. (Pan Lusheng 1990) noted that common themes in Chinese folk-art include ancestor worship, the desire for wealth, worship of life, praise for humanity, thinking of reality and love nature. These themes are still found in recent folk artist. (Xu Jianghua and Zhang Min 2007) believes that product design can be treated as a design of people's lifestyle. It will definitely influence people's spiritual life and personal psychology and is also related to the object world, social environment, natural environment as well as the physical and mental development of customers. The advantages of making this set of tableware are as follows: first, the combination of the God of Wealth and tableware can have a very significant meaning to customers; second, it can bring elements of traditional Chinese culture into people's daily life so that more and more people will understand and appreciate it; third, it can represent the characteristics of Yanchuan Patchwork and may impact designers from different countries.



Figure 6.5 The original picture of God of Wealth by Gao Fenglian.

The picture above is the original patchwork ‘God of Wealth’ by Gao Fenglian. This patchwork uses a symmetrical composition, which is based on the beauty of balance of the philosophy of Yin and Yang. The background colour is red, which means luck and happiness in Chinese culture, and it also contrasts with other colours such as yellow and black. Looking at the figure’s head, Gao Fenglian decorated the hair of the God of Wealth with dragon and tiger totems, which represent heaven and earth, respectively. The coin totem can be seen in many places in this patchwork, which represents infinite wealth.

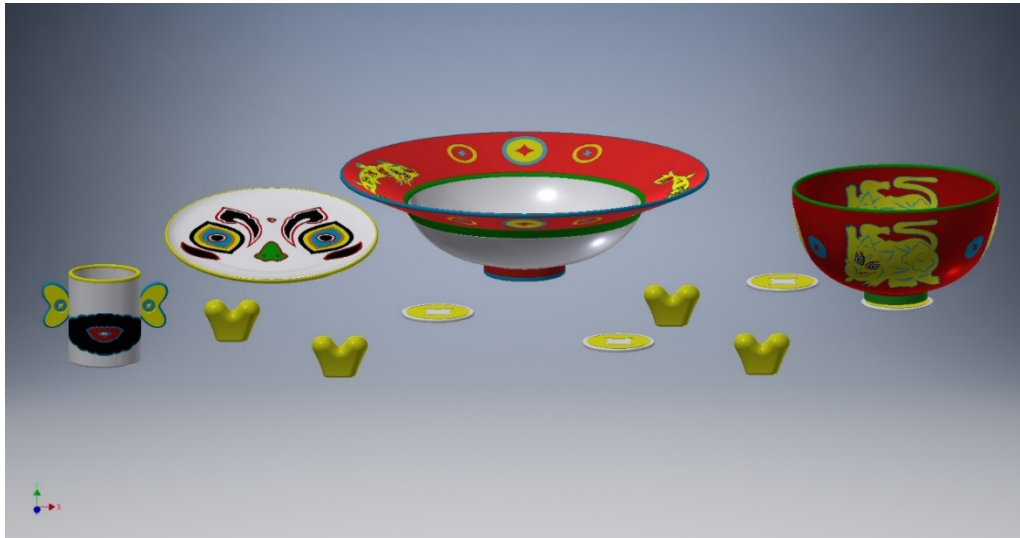


Figure 6.6 The God of Wealth Tableware in Autodesk Inventor.

The tableware in this experiment used colours that are similar to the original work because even the colours in patchwork have their own meanings. The Figure 6.6 above is the design interface in Autodesk Inventor. The author designed a cup, a plate, a big bowl, a small bowl, some coasters and some chopstick rests based on the head of the God of Wealth. The process of making this tableware is complicated. First, we must measure the real size of each object and then create new documents in Autodesk Inventor separately. The products in each document were created layer-by-layer based on the colours. Even in very small part, if the colour is different from other parts, the author had to create a new layer for it. Before sending the documents to the 3D printing company, each product in each document should be checked to ensure all the elements have been aligned. After checking, the author sent those documents to a 3D printing design company in Shenzhen, and printing took approximately 1 day. The field of 3D Printing is developing rapidly, which will have an impact on costs and on the quality of the materials. The

3D printer that printed this set of tableware is called the 3D Systems Project 660 Pro, which is professional industrial-grade 3D printing equipment. The material was called Colourful Sandstone, and the entire set cost 6300 Chinese Yuan.



Figure 6.7 The sketch and the real objects of the God of Wealth Tableware.



Figure 6.8 The real objects of the God of Wealth Tableware.

The outcome of this series of tableware is generally satisfactory. First, the shapes of each part exactly match the models in the Autodesk Inventor software. Second, the colours are displayed clearly and correctly. Third, the 3D printed works may help designers see the result of their design in a short time period and determine whether it is suitable to be produced in large numbers. However, some disadvantages have been found as well. The cost of 3D printing is expensive, and the 3D printed products are not stable enough for use in real life.

6.4 Evaluation

6.4.1. Purpose

This evaluation aims to demonstrate to what extent the experiments of 3D printing design works can be accepted by the local patchwork artists in Yanchuan. The first purpose in this section is to show the latest design technology to local patchwork artists through the experiments above, which may inspire them to use this technology in future creations. Another purpose is to encourage local artists to insist and inherit their creation and skills by introducing how they can cooperate with designers and how the patchwork art can be utilized into other areas. The last purpose is to verify whether the experiment can solve the research question of ‘how can the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation be improved?’



Figure 6.9 The author introducing her works in the patchwork training course.

6.4.2. Sharing Design Innovation

A classroom from a patchwork training course was used, which was organized by the Yanchuan Literary Federation. In total, fifteen people from Yanchuan were selected and participated in this evaluation section. Some of these women are patchwork artists, such as Liu Jieqiong and Feng Shanyun, and some of them are patchwork students. The number of participants was approximately twenty percent of all the students and artists. This demonstration might be the first time these local students know about design innovation.

Before beginning the evaluation section, the author introduced the 3D printed The God of Wealth Tableware to everyone who attended the training course. This introduction took approximately one hour including the question and

answer session. Both the technology of 3D printing and the design concept of the author were introduced to the group, as well as the design and creation process. Through discussion with the students, the author learned that it was the first time all the people in this training course saw this series of work and saw actual 3D printed products. The author designed an anonymous questionnaire to be completed by the participants in order to determine to what extent they can accept this kind of cultural-based innovation form and the corporation possibility in the future. This evaluation took approximately 2 hours, and all the participants were very cooperative. However, some of them were illiterate and needed help from others to finish the questionnaire, which was one challenge of this process.



Figures 6.10 The participants filling out questionnaires in the patchwork training course.

6.4.3. Questionnaire

There are in total nine questions in the questionnaire. These questions are based on the research questions ‘How can contemporary designers cite the symbols of traditional Chinese handicrafts properly?’ and ‘How can the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural

heritages through design innovation be improve?’ Through the answers of those artists, some new findings and insufficient parts have been found. The author has summarized the answers to each of the question in Appendix 2.

6.4.4. Results

Through the results of the questionnaire, we found that most of these artists gave positive feedback. According to the research question: ‘How can the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation be improved?’ some patchwork artists showed their desire to protect and promote Yanchuan Patchwork after communicating with the author.

Concerning the 3D printing God of Wealth Tableware, most of the participants gave positive comments on the design from the colour, element and structure. Some of the participants made suggestions on the colours and other elements. According to the results, all the participants would like to have more chances to cooperate with designers in the future in order to propagandize their own patchworks. Most of these artists already have an awareness about and ideas for design innovation. The results of the questionnaires can also treat as a chance for modern designers to know more about this kind of traditional Chinese folk art.

However, the reality is that most of the Yanchuan patchwork artists have no idea about how to make connections with designers and have no way to

realize their dreams. This situation should be improved through support from the local government and designers from different areas. For instance, the Yanchuan government could organize local artists to give lectures or hold workshops in art schools with students in relevant art majors.; meanwhile, it could enhance the external publicity to attract more tourists as well as invite students to Yanchuan to visit the living environments of local artists to enrich the communication between the two groups.

Regarding the development of Yanchuan Patchwork, more and more people have started creating it through the training courses. All the participants insist on making Yanchuan Patchwork and are willing to impart their skills to other people. The local women who can make patchwork do so not only out of habit but also as a way to support their life. The weakness of the training course is that the environment is relatively poor because some patchworks require a larger space for the tools and fabrics, and a large class of students may make it challenging for the teachers to take care of everyone, which affects the effectiveness of the teaching.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

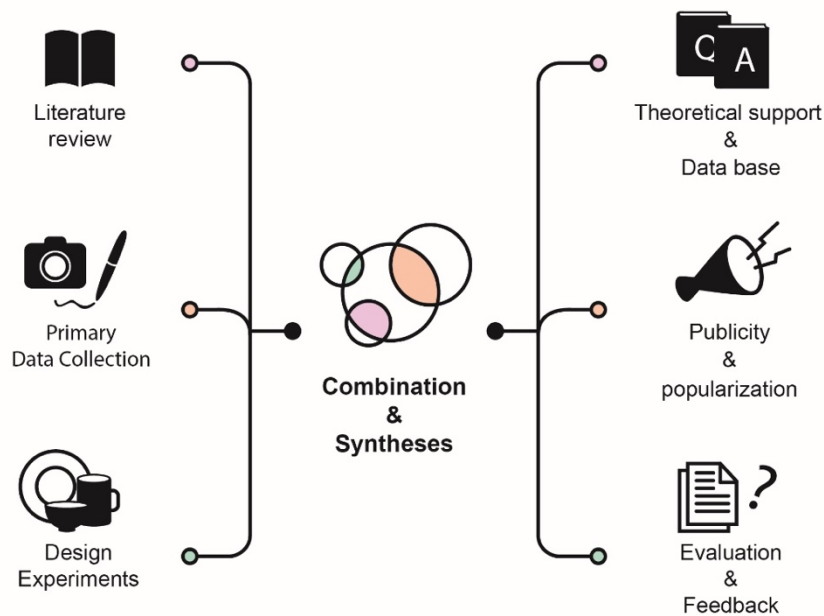
7.1 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research is to develop a framework for culture-based design innovation for the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage such as the Yanchuan Patchwork. Looking back on all the studies that have been conducted in this doctoral research, some initial research objectives have been achieved, and the research questions have been responded to by systematically applying thorough qualitative research methods.

In detail, the literature review has covered the origin of patchwork, Chinese semiotics in philosophy, and the origin of Chinese symbols in aesthetic and Chinese semiotics in culture-based design innovation. This review provides the theoretical background to understand the Yanchuan Patchwork and how to systematically use Chinese symbols. Throughout the entire progression of this research, I have chosen a series of qualitative research methods based on the Art Anthropology theory, which includes data collection through semi-structured interviews, reactive observations, and a small-scale questionnaire. The primary part of the case study was conducted in Yanchuan County with local patchwork artists and their families through field investigations.

7.1.1. A Theoretical Framework

Table 2. A diagram of research stages.



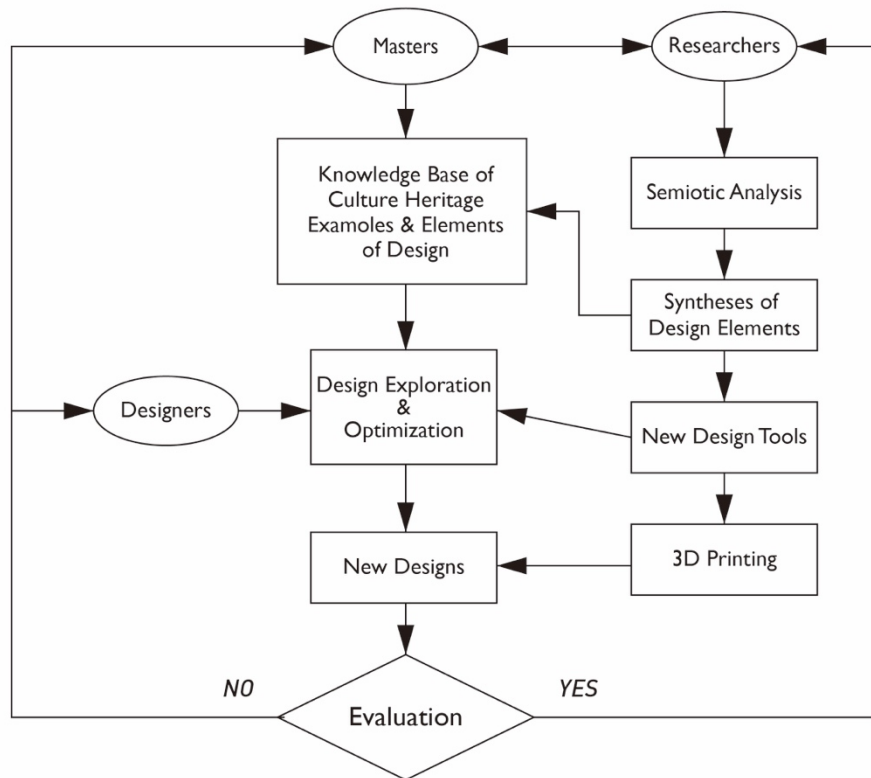
The idea of a framework of culture-based design innovation for the protection and development of culture heritage has been built from the literature review and the previous data collection. In the diagram above, it is clear that there are three main parts of the previous research: the literature review, the primary data collection, and the application of design knowledge and skills through design experiments. Through careful combination and syntheses, these three parts led to three relevant outcomes. The first outcome promotes Yanchuan patchwork to the public, which includes the picture documents, the making skills and the aesthetic values of it. The second outcome provides theoretical support to researchers and offers a systematic database of the Yanchuan patchwork to modern designers. Then, the last outcome shows the results of

the design experiments based on the knowledge obtained from the primary literature review and the primary data collection as well as the acquired evaluations and feedback from local patchwork artists.

The diagram below highlights the scope and the process in which research, design, and development on the preservation of culture heritages and innovations for creating new designs or a new medium of art expressions. It identifies the necessary components of the study which are centered around design exploration through combination and syntheses. These components provide the basis for defining a framework for design innovation through culture studies and heritage preservation and development by working closely with the masters of traditional arts and handicrafts.

This study contributed to the construction of this framework in future researches in which the framework may be developed to serve as a virtual design environment within which masters, designers, researchers, and users can collectively work together in the process of designing new products, or in design education. The following diagram illustrates this framework which can be fully developed in the future studies.

Table 3. A framework of culture-based design innovation.



7.1.2. Results of the Study

7.1.2.1. Answering the Research Questions

7.1.2.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the specific denotations and connotations of traditional Chinese symbols in the Yanchuan Patchwork?

- **Research Methods:** Through the reviews of the literature in CHAPTER 2, the origin of the Yanchuan Patchwork has been defined in detail. The specific denotations and connotations of the elements in the Yanchuan Patchwork are closely related to the theory of Chinese semiotics and Chinese Primitivism philosophy, which emphasizes the

importance of balance in the composition of patchwork. In the data collection part in CHAPTER 4, some interviews and observations have been conducted in Yanchuan County with local patchwork artists; those artists have also explained the meanings of the symbols that they used to use in their works. This knowledge is passed down from generation to generation by their families; thus, solving this research question becomes easier through the deep understanding of their lifestyle and living environment.

- **Outcomes:** The findings from the literature review and data collection showed that most of the connotations of those traditional symbols in the Yanchuan Patchwork are classified into categories of animals, plants, articles of daily use, and humans. The denotations of all these symbols are different from their connotations; the symbols usually have some auspicious meanings or blessings for someone, which can be found in CHAPTER 5.

7.1.2.1.2 Research Question 2: How do folk artists improve their ways of imparting their skills to subsequent generations?

- **Research Methods:** Some direct observations have been conducted in Yanchuan and Nanjing in CHAPTER 4 to investigate the research question above. In Yanchuan County, the author found that almost all the famous local patchwork artists have their own studios for people to visit and for them to exhibit their works. Meanwhile, the local

government, Literary Federation and Women's Federation usually hold training courses on patchwork, paper cutting and other relevant folk arts. Therefore, the studios of artists can attract people to learn more about patchwork and to inspire them with master level skills; the training courses can provide a learning environment for people willing to learn patchwork.

- **Outcomes:** The findings of these observations showed that while on the one hand most of the Yanchuan patchwork artists are willing to impart their skill to others, on the other hand, with the support from local government and other organizations, it has become a trend that more and more people will be involved in and will begin to learn this skill.

7.1.2.1.3 Research Question 3: How can contemporary designers properly cite the symbols of traditional Chinese handicrafts?

- **Research Methods:** The research methods of solving this research question were completed through reviewing the literature and conducting data analysis. In CHAPTER 2, the literature review on the theory of design innovation has defined some rules for using traditional Chinese symbols in design works as well as some experiments from modern designers. The data analysis in CHAPTER

5 explained the specific meanings of the commonly used symbols in Yanchuan patchwork; this explanation may also guide designers to properly cite the symbols in their design works. Some experiments in CHAPTER 6 can also reflect on this research question and will be explained in the last research question.

- **Outcomes:** The outcomes of this research question showed how modern designers can follow the concept of the Chinese Primitivism Philosophy more properly through the understanding of the literature and how to avoid the misuse of traditional Chinese symbols in design works through the experiences of designers.

7.1.2.1.4 Research Question 4: How can the awareness of artists to protect the disappearing Chinese intangible cultural heritages through design innovation be improved?

- **Research Methods:** To improve the awareness of patchwork artists to protect their knowledge and skills through design innovation, the author has conducted some design experiments in CHAPTER 6 through graphic design, laser cutting design and 3D printing design. The theme of these experiments is related to Yanchuan patchwork and paper cutting; some photos and elements have been directly used in the design works. All the works are based on the traditional Chinese thinking of Yin and Yang as well as the theory of Chinese Primitivism

Philosophy. A small-scale questionnaire about 3D printing design was then administered with Yanchuan patchwork artists in a local patchwork training course after the introduction of the design works by the author.

- **Outcomes:** The experiments showed how designers can cite traditional Chinese symbols in the Yanchuan patchwork according to the knowledge of Chinese Primitivism Philosophy and the thinking of Yin and Yang while designing their works. As determined by the statistical results of the questionnaires, the design experiment of 3D printing has provided some inspiration to the local patchwork artists. The patchwork artists have also shown their intentions of cooperating with modern designers and passing their skills to other people.

Reflecting on the research objectives, it can be stated that most of them have been achieved through past investigations. Chinese semiotics and Chinese Primitivism Philosophy are closely related to Shaanxi folk arts. Through the study of the theories of these arts, some first-hand data have been collected. Combined with the relevant knowledge, I provided a deeper understanding of the methods, significance and social values of the Yanchuan Patchwork through theoretical analysis, literature research and some deep field studies that were conducted in the northern part of the Shaanxi Province.

The culture-based innovation can be treated as a long-term method of maintaining popularity in these traditional folk arts such as Yanchuan Patchwork. Lupton, Ellen (2012) mentions that design is a powerful method that may help products to become more attractive, thereby withstanding sustainable competition. This competition may also be a strategy to protect the disappearing traditional folk arts. In the last part of this study, I have conducted some experiments after the detailed analysis and the second round of data collection. These experiments helped identify inspirational values of cultural references for modern design that can be supported and demonstrated by modern design technologies. In the evaluation section, some positive feedback was received from the participants in the Yanchuan Patchwork training course, even though it was the first time they observed the 3D printing design works. This feedback may demonstrate whether the framework described above is, to a certain extent, valuable for design fields.

7.2 Discussion

Over the past three and a half years, I conducted a number of relevant field investigations in the northern Shaanxi Province. This approach was also a long-term learning process. Reviewing the four main research questions and following all the data collection, I arrived at the knowledge of the specific denotation and connotation of a large proportion of the traditional Chinese

symbols in the Yanchuan Patchwork and the great philosophical thinking of Yin and Yang, which has been partly analysed in CHAPTER 5. In recent years, with the strong support and promotion from the government, traditional folk arts have been promoted and popularized in various places. Many craftspeople have already set up their own studios as well as training courses in their cities and counties. For example, in October 2018, an exhibition of traditional folk arts was held in Yanchuan County by local government and cultural federation, which includes paper cutting, patchwork, clay sculpture and embroidery works. Many young people from Yanchuan and other places were inspired by the beautiful art works. After the exhibition, a patchwork course organized by Liu Jieqiong has been conducted in Yanchuan, this time, more young people have joined the course and showed great interests on the Yanchuan Patchwork. Under this trend, the inheritance of traditional Chinese folk arts will surely be protected and improved in the future. In regard to design aspects, to cite the symbols of traditional Chinese handicrafts properly, handicrafts need to first follow the concept of the Chinese Primitivism Philosophy and the thinking of Yin and Yang. Without these concepts, the design work will lose its soul. In regard to design innovation aspects, it is necessary to let folk artists know what they can do for design innovation and how they can cooperate with designers to realize their ideas. Following this strategy, their awareness of protecting their skills of Chinese folk arts will be improved.

7.2.1. Limitations

Although there are important discoveries revealed by all the studies in this thesis, there are also some limitations. First, there are too many symbols in Chinese folk arts. Even though the Yanchuan Patchwork is only a small branch, it will be hard to collect all the data on them because the shapes of symbols also change over time. Second, researchers need longer time or even a lifetime to understand and get accustomed to the culture and lifestyle of Chinese folk artists. Third, the feedback to the experiments of culture-based design innovation is not rich enough to indicate the significance of the impact brought by the innovation method explored in the experiments. I need to invite more people from diverse design areas to give their opinions and suggestions in the future.

7.2.2. Suggestions for further research

To protect and promote the Yanchuan patchwork, some feasible suggestions and future plans have been raised by the author: first, researchers may establish close connections with local government and some local folk art organizations to verify to what extent they can support the popularization of Yanchuan Patchwork; second, it is also necessary to maintain a good connection with some modern designers or design students and to conduct discussions with them to determine the potential possibilities of combining

folk art with the latest design technologies; third, the Yanchuan Patchwork can be introduced to academic fields through publishing relevant papers with theoretical knowledge; fourth, some exhibitions dedicated to the Yanchuan Patchwork should be held, where it would be better to invite some artists to present their skills in front of audiences as well as to explain the symbols in their works at the same time; and finally, using Gao Fenglian as an example, as many Chinese folk artists are becoming very old, it is urgent to conduct investigations with them and their close family members to avoid losing precious information materials.

In summary, the studies have established a theoretical framework of culture-based design innovation for the protection and development of intangible cultural heritages for design through examples and experiments with the Yanchuan Patchwork. This framework may not be impeccable, but it includes the experiments and knowledge of the author through the few years of studies of the Yanchuan Patchwork and on Chinese folk art. This framework could also become a reference for other researchers to conduct similar research for other kinds of Chinese folk arts. The study of the Yanchuan Patchwork will not end; the author will keep investigating and developing more opportunities for it in the future.

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Appendix

1) Transcripts of interview with Professor Jin Zhilin



On 2015 June 11th, author have been to Beijing and conducted an interview with Professor Jin Zhilin, who was born in 1928 in Hebei Province. Jin is a famous oil painter that his oil painting teacher was Beihong XU and his traditional Chinese painting teacher was Baishi QI, the most famous painters in China. He is also an arts educationalist and PhD supervisor in the China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Director of the Chinese Primitive Culture Institute of Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, committee number of the Chinese folk intangible cultural heritage protection project of committee of experts of the Chinese Ministry of Culture and an expert who is entitled of the government allowances of State Department special contribution. Jin has made great contribution on the protection and data collection of traditional Chinese culture and he is the avant-garde researcher of the Chinese Primitivism Culture and Philosophy. In the content below, **A** represent Author and **J** represent Professor Jin Zhilin.

Content

A: Good morning Professor Jin.

J: Good morning, are you the student from Hong Kong?

A: Yes I have called you the day before yesterday and thank you for accepting my interview. Actually I am from Xi'an, now I am a PhD student of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and this is my first year.

J: Ok, can you introduce your research topic to me and when are you going to do your oral examination and presentation?

A: Sure, my research topic is to create a collection of Shaanxi's cultural elements that may help designers to understand and use those elements more properly in their design works. And I am going to do my conformation on this November.

J: Ok, so why you choose me to do your interview?

A: I am very interested in the Chinese primitivism culture and philosophy. When I searched the relevant information on google, I found that you are the most frequent number of the result list.

J: Yes, only some of my PhD students and I are doing this area of research. Most of their major are about general history and create their own works.

A: Ok, may I ask you some questions about the Chinese primitivism culture and philosophy?

J: Sure. What do you want to know?

A: The first question is what is the theoretical basis of the Chinese primitivism philosophy?

J: It came from people's culture consciousness. There were no words in the late primitive society, but the symbols can show the meanings, those primitive symbols have constituted conventional information network.

A: The second question is how did you conduct the research on the Chinese primitivism culture and philosophy?

J: Well, the answer of this question can be found in one of my book named 'the tree of life', have you read it?

A: Yes I have borrowed one from library but I haven't finish yet.

J: This book has mentions that there are three kinds of research methods. First of all, you should better have a Chinese historical background, and then combine the knowledge of history and other relevant literatures. For example, some books are very important for conducting this research such as 'the book of changes' and 'the legends of mountains and seas', if you have time, you should read these.

A: Ok I will read them.

J: The most important part is to do deep research into the villages and talk to local people because some of the primitivism culture have no word version

but record by the local traditional handicrafts such as paper cutting and embroidery works.

A: I have been to Gao Fenglian's home for 3 times but she was very quiet, and I have also visited some local artists such as Liu Jieqiong and Feng Shanyun. These people really helped and influenced me a lot.

J: As you said that you have been to Yanchuan village and met with Gao Fenglian, the purpose of you is not for data collection but for understanding her way of thinking as a local handicrafts woman. If she is not talkative, you may try to talk with others.

A: Yes I understand. Another question is that do you think the concept of the Chinese primitivism philosophy can be in common use in all the China?

J: Yes of course. The Chinese primitivism philosophy is a complete and scientific system which can helps people to understand the scientific culture from natural science to social science in China.

A: Are the meaning of traditional cultural symbols in Shaanxi Province different with other provinces like minority area?

J: There are many different typical traditional cultural symbols in different area, some of them have same meaning but some have extra meanings established by the local people. Although there are differences between regional cultures, the primitivism cultural connotations are the same. For your

research, maybe you don't have enough time to do the collection of whole China but you can focus on Shaanxi Province, it is quite enough.

A: There are many kinds of traditional handicrafts in Shaanxi, which one do you think is the most representative one from all the kinds of those handicrafts?

J: I think paper cutting and embroidery are very representative.

A: I am very interested in Yanchuan patchwork; do you think it is valuable to research?

J: Yanchuan patchwork is a ramification of paper cutting and embroidery but its history is much shorter than paper cutting and embroidery. My advice is that you can focus on the embroidery part or some festival such as Dragon Boat Festival or the tiger totem. Do you know why people put the five poisonous creatures on their children's clothes when the days around Dragon Boat Festival?

A: Yes, the function of the five poisonous creatures is to combat poison with poison because June in the Chinese lunar calendar is the month that many people may get sick.

J: You see, a traditional festival includes so many information and cultural custom, these are all very worth to investigate.

A: You just mentioned the tiger totem, could you give me some examples?

J: Shaanxi is the cradleland of the tiger totem, the local people used to decorate their room and clothes with tiger totem to exorcise the evil spirits. You can found these on paper cutting works, tiger shoes, tiger hats and tiger pillows.

A: Thank you for your suggestion but I still want to continue my research on the Yanchuan patchwork because this is also a kind of our local handicrafts and the image elements may give designers inspirations. My research may also help to reduce the speed of the disappearing of Yanchuan patchwork.

J: Your movement is good but I have no right to decide what you should do. I remember that I had a French PhD student few years ago and she wanted do research on the cave houses in north Shaanxi, then she came to the small village to learn how to build a cave house from how to make the bricks. After the learning step by step, she wrote a very perfect thesis and that was the best thesis I have seen.

A: That sounds incredible, so do you means that it is very necessary to conduct the relevant field trip?

J: Yes, and also do your research as deep as you can. Hong Kong is a modern city and it also has its own culture and custom. But if you want to do researches on patchwork, then you have to go Yanchuan Village and learn how to make it from step by step, and be familiar with the surrounded environment and local people.

A: Really thank you for your valuable advices. I am very willing to go to the countryside if I have a chance in the future.

J: Ok, I have an appointment with another person soon; if you have any questions in the future just feel free to contact me.

A: Ok. Thank you so much. Wish you everything good and let's keep contact.
Good bye.

2) Transcripts of interview with Professor Jin Zhilin in Chinese 靳之林教授采访内容

薛: 靳老师早上好!

靳: 早上好, 你是香港来的博士生吗? 刘洁琼给我打过招呼。

薛: 是的, 我昨天给您打过电话, 感谢您愿意接受我的采访。我来自西安, 现在是香港理工大学博士一年级的学生。

靳: 好, 我知道了, 你先给我介绍一下你的研究课题, 你什么时候答辩?

薛: 没问题, 我研究的方向主要是想要收集一系列关于陕西的文化符号, 通过分析这些符号的含义从而帮助当代设计师去理解并将它们合理应用在他们的设计作品中。今年的 11 月我将要进行我的中期答辩, 也就是咱们说的开题报告。

靳: 好的, 你为什么选择我做你的访谈对象?

薛: 我对中国本原哲学非常感兴趣, 很久之前我在网上搜索相关信息时

就了解到您是这方面最权威的专家学者，我也拜读了很多您的著作，里面的内容非常吸引我。

靳：是的，现在只有我和我的几个博士学生在做这方面的研究，不过他们很多都是研究历史方向的，有的也是忙着创作自己的作品。

薛：原来是这样，我可以请教您几个关于中国本原文化和本原哲学的问题吗？

靳：当然可以，你想知道什么？

薛：第一个问题是：请问中国本原哲学的理论根据是什么？

靳：这个主要来自于人们的文化意识。在原始社会晚期本来是没有文字的，当时的人们通过绘制不同的符号来表达所想表达的意思，那些原始的符号就组成了一个约定俗成的信息网络，也就是本原哲学最初的理论根据。

薛：第二个问题我想知道您是如何进行关于中国本原文化和哲学的研究的？

靳：这个答案你可以在我的书里找到，《生命之树》你看过没有？

薛：我之前在图书馆借了一本，还没有看完。

靳：我这本书里提到了三种研究方法，首先你最好有研究过中国历史的背景，然后将这些历史知识和其他相关的文献相结合去研究。比如说进行这方面的研究前有几本非常重要的书你需要去看，像《易经》啊《山海经》还有《黄帝内经》这些，你有时间的话最好去读一下。

薛：好的我记下了。

靳：最重要的部分是到村子里去进行深度的调研，和当地的人多交流，

因为很多关于本原文化的知识是没有文字记录的，但是很多当地传统的手工艺人都会了解，比如做剪纸和刺绣的那些老人都会把这些文化内容口传心授给自己家里的晚辈们。

薛：我去过三次延川高凤莲奶奶的家里，她总是很寡言，我还去拜访了一些像刘洁琼和冯山云这样的艺术家，他们对我的研究帮助很大，也影响了我很多。

靳：就像你说的你去了延川县见到了高凤莲，你的主要目的不是说是去收集数据，而是应该尝试着站在她的角度，一个传统手工妇女的角度去思考问题。如果她不健谈的话你就尝试着和其他的人去交流。

薛：好的我明白了，之后我还会经常去延川做调研，我会试着多跟他们接触，站在他们的角度思考问题。下一个问题是中国有那么多种传统手工艺和非物质文化遗产，您认为本原哲学的理论可以在中国普遍应用吗？

靳：当然可以。中国本原哲学是一个完整的科学的体系，它可以帮助人们从自然科学到社会科学的角度去理解科学文化的知识。

薛：陕西省的传统文化符号和其他省的文化符号在含义上是有区别的吗，比如少数民族的那些符号？

靳：在不同的地区有很多不同种类的具有代表性的传统文化符号，这些符号有的含义是相同的但是有的则被当地的人们赋予了其他含义。尽管不同地区有着差异性，本原文化的内涵都是相通的。你的研究可能没有时间去收集整个中国的符号含义，但你可以主要研究陕西省的，这就已经很足够了。

薛：陕西省也有很多种手工艺，您认为最有代表性的是哪个呢？

靳：我觉得是剪纸和刺绣。

薛：我对延川布堆画非常感兴趣，您认为它值得作为研究对象吗？

靳：延川布堆画是剪纸和刺绣的一个衍生物，但是它的历史要比剪纸和刺绣短。我建议你可以关注刺绣这部分关于节日的主题比如端午节或者虎图腾这些。你知道为什么人们要在端午节的时候把五种有毒的动物的图案绣在他们自己孩子的衣服上吗？

薛：这是为了以毒攻毒吧，因为中国农历的六月气温不稳定，很多人都容易生病。

靳：是啊，你看看，一个传统的节日就包含了这么多的信息和文化习俗，这些都是非常值得去深入研究的内容。

薛：还有您刚才说的虎图腾，能麻烦您举一些具体的例子吗？

靳：陕西是虎图腾的发源地，他们当地的人经常给家里还有衣服上用虎图腾来装饰，可以起到镇宅驱邪的作用。你可以在很多剪纸作品上看到，还有虎头鞋，虎头帽，虎头枕这些，都是当地人对虎图腾的一种崇拜。

薛：非常感谢您的建议，我还是想继续我对延川布堆画这块儿的研究，因为它也是我们当地的一门传统手工艺，而且布堆画精美的表现形式和符号元素或许可以给当代设计师带来灵感和启发。或许我的研究还可以减缓布堆画的消失速度。

靳：你的动机是很好的，我没有权力帮你决定你要做什么。我记得我很多年以前有一个法国来的博士研究生，她想做陕北窑洞这方面的研究，然后她就自己跑去陕北的小村子里学习怎么盖窑洞，甚至自己学怎么做砖头。你想她在一个语言都很难沟通的地方就这么坚持下来了，经过一

步步的学习最后完成了非常棒的博士论文，是我带过最好的一个学生。

薛：真的是太厉害了。您的意思是进行相关的田野调查是非常有必要的对吗？

靳：对，而且你要在你能力范围内进行的越深入越好。香港是个很现代化的城市，它也有它自己的文化和习俗，但是你要是想研究布堆画，那你还是得去到延川县城，一步步的去学习怎么制作，尽可能地去熟悉当地的环境和人。

薛：真的非常感谢您的建议，如果将来有足够的时间，我非常愿意去农村进行深入的研究。

靳：好了，我后面还约了其他人，你如果以后有什么问题可以随时联系我。

薛：好的，谢谢您靳老师，请您务必保重身体，咱们保持联系，再见！

靳：再见！

11/06/2015

3) Traditional Proverbs in Yanchuan Dialect in Chinese

陕北民间谚语

婚嫁：

石榴赛牡丹，一赛一河（铺）滩。

石榴赛牡丹，姑姑爱老汉。

鱼儿戏莲花，俩口子睡下结缘法。

鱼儿钻莲花，一铺滩娃娃满炕爬。

仙桃对莲花，两家结下好缘法。

男坐牡丹女坐莲，八个仙人送银元。

双双核桃双双枣，双双儿女满炕跑。

白女子，黑小子，能针快马要好的。

养女子，要巧的，石榴牡丹冒铰的。

养小子，要好的，双手写字戴顶子。

腊月喇叭，转个哈巴，喇叭开花，女孩不断。

新女婿上炕揭莲花，一铺滩娃娃满炕爬。

莲拉牡，必定富，吉祥富贵扎下根。

铰云子，攒银子。

生男生女养嫖子（新娘子）。

抓髻不眯眯，婆家不引来。

格里格劳种的好糜子，丑老婆生的好儿子。

瓶里出莲出牡丹，婆媳结下好缘法，事事如意，婆媳如气。

腊月里贴对子，黑格悠悠睡下一对子。

仙桃对莲花，两口子生下个胖娃娃。

娃娃坐莲花，俩口子结缘法，身下设聚宝盆，新媳妇一定生贵人，边上

剪个碎万字，新媳妇聪明懂万事。

鱼儿闹莲花，俩口子睡下结缘法。

荷叶开花两扇，哥哥搂住二妹子。

狮子滚金钱，俩口子有金钱。

狮子赛如意，一辈子常如意。

狮子滚绣球，你们俩个闹红火。

狮子滚绣球，好事在后头。

手举莲花骑老虎，莲生虎子。

虎顶牡丹鸡含菜，花轿台上新人来。

石榴赛佛手，儿孙满堂无忧愁。

神仙：

头上打个抓髻像凤凰，身上挂个虎牌最机灵，脚上穿个猪头鞋像猪儿子一样肯吃肯喝好抚养。

抓髻娃娃脚蹬梅，咯咯鸡唤的小子来抓髻娃娃坐莲台，一辈子不缺人和财。

翻手娃娃头顶鸡，两膝登梅报来喜。

（男）骑上枣红马，拨开蓝天门，上天容易下天难，只说凡间的好，不说凡间的歹。

（女）婆姨人不算人，山羊母子不敬神，奴的男人不在家，奴家的女人顶上他。小米熬成面糖糖，糊起灶马爷爷的嘴唇唇。灶马的嘴甜丝丝，上天不能乱说话，灶马拨开蓝天的门，只说凡间的好，不说凡间的歹。新的门神请进来，大鬼小鬼不进来，全家平安又幸福。

财神爷怀里放个金元宝，前屯子圪尖后屯子满，金银财宝满院子跑。

一不扫天，二不扫地，三扫个老蓝天，扫天媳妇你是神，把日头挂在当

中间，云彩扫在四下里。

一不挖天，二不挖地，三挖个老红天。

烟筒烟筒簸簸箕，你把黑云簸过去，枣红了，我叫你，枣落了，我送你。

天不怕，地不怕，单怕拉手娃娃门上叉。

拉手娃娃手拉手，妖魔鬼怪送出大门口。

神怪，鬼怪，我星不见怪，头上送了头上轻，身上送了身上轻，腿上送了腿上轻，混声上下都是轻。不干的，不净的，送走了，不见了。把他带得净净的，让他浑身利得索索的，清得索索的。

箩子箩上身，擗杖擗上身，笤帚扫上身，引魂鸡引上身。

天皇皇，地皇皇，我家有个夜哭郎，行人路过念三遍，一觉睡到大天明。

腊月二十三，老君来撒丹，门上贴青牛，四季报平安。

大头娃娃簸簸箕，你把黑云簸过去。

天不怕，地不怕，就怕瓜子娃娃打八叉。

生活类：

一佛手，九石榴，守住娘老子再不走。

半夜生的女人命带硬，属羊的女人命带苦。

男人属羊茂堂堂，女人属羊泪汪汪。

人勤地不赖，人懒地不肥。

千年老根黄土里埋，树高千尺忘不了根。

大葫芦压窗台，财源滚滚来。

鸡吃白菜狗撵鸡，一起能活一百一。

女大自巧，狗大自咬。

先看人手儿巧，再看人俊丑。

把黄纸人放在娃娃睡觉的地方，口中反复念道：“纸人纸人你是听，你和我娃一胎生。

虎是山中王，镇宅保安康。

虎贴在门上，免灾保全家平安无事。

家里有山王，这家人保安康。

五月五，五端阳，吃粽子，饮雄黄，锦鸡贴门上，蝎子蜈蚣都死光。

端午不戴艾虎虎，死了变个老鳖盖。

端午节，天气热，五毒醒，不安宁。

六月六，汗水流，铰把扇子插坟头，子孙都应尽孝道，死者九泉乐悠悠。

猪贴在门上，保全家平安无事。

青牛贴在门上，我是上天青牛，不吃人间荤和料，专吃人间小鬼头。

天瘟地瘟，不如老牛抵一角。

棒槌棒，把儿朝上，天阴下雨能遮挡。

若要富，蛇盘兔，万事如意两勾住。

蛇盘兔，必定富。

贴上蛇盘兔，种下摇钱树。

猴耍兔，富的地流油。

三童抱石榴，四世同堂住金楼。

童子骑葫芦，五毒瓶里放。

马驮元宝，子孙早来。

象驮宝，不中状元中阁老。

五毒镇在葫芦里，一年四季不受害。

鸡啄蝎，百害远离身。

蝴蝶闹瓜瓜，五谷满家家。

七十石糜子，八十石谷，九十石黑豆够牛吃，南瓜葫芦担不完，棉花包子窑里搁不下。

蛇，蝎，爬爬，中原里，过过。

4) Answers of Questionnaires in Yanchuan Patchwork training course

● Question 1: What is your first impression of this series of work?

- 1) It is nice and beautiful.
- 2) It is creative.
- 3) This group of works has reflected the previous way of life.
- 4) It looks good but feeling something missing.
- 5) The first impression of this work is that it has inherited the deep tradition.
- 6) It looks beautiful.
- 7) It is shocked to me.

- 8) It looks very good to me.
- 9) The content of this set of works are very abundant.
- 10) The first impression on this work is that the animals and objects are unlikeness, but after much contact, I learned what art is.
- 11) It is very beautiful.
- 12) It looks very interesting to me and I wish to know it more.
- 13) It is distinctive that combine the symbols of patchwork with the set of tableware, looks very vintage.
- 14) It looks beautiful.

Outcome: mostly positive responses on the first impression.

● **Question 2: Do you think this series of work can fully express the skill and connotation of Yanchuan Patchwork?**

- 1) Yes.
- 2) Yes.
- 3) Yes.
- 4) Yes, it has reflected the thinking of Gao Fenglian.

- 5) Yes, I think it can reflect both the skill and the connotation of patchwork.
- 6) Yes.
- 7) Yes.
- 8) Yes.
- 9) Yes. The designer is embodying patchwork through using a different method with us.
- 10) No answer.
- 11) Yes.
- 12) Yes, it can especially able to reflect the skill and connotation of patchwork.
- 13) Yes.
- 14) Yes.

Outcome: all positive responses except one with no answer.

● **Question 3: Are there any advantages of this series of work?**

- 1) The idea of this set of tableware is unique.
- 2) This set of works can further promote our folk Yanchuan Patchwork.

- 3) It is very in detailed.
- 4) It is in itself a way to promote and develop Yanchuan Patchwork through combine the symbols on the products.
- 5) I think there are many advantages in this set of works, but I cannot express it through my words, I can only image it in my mind.
- 6) It has reflected our local specialties.
- 7) This group of tableware has beautiful appearance; it is distinctive with rich colors.
- 8) Yes. The color matching is good.
- 9) Through this group of works, people can see the development of traditional cultural techniques from the real objects more intuitively.
- 10) This set of works is artistic and unique.
- 11) It has combined design into daily life.
- 12) It can reflect our life more vividly and the patterns are very beautiful.
- 13) It is very practical and unique.
- 14) No answer.

Outcome: most of participants pointed out the advantages of this set of work.

● **Question 4: Is there anything that needs to improve in this design?**

(From the aspects of color, element and structure.)

- 1) No need.
- 2) I think all aspects are good.
- 3) It is not necessary to improve.
- 4) It could be more bright as original patchwork, or could be more simple.
- 5) I think it need some improvement.
- 6) The elements could be more creativity.
- 7) No need.
- 8) No need.
- 9) The color, structure and elements are all very unique, it can let more people know about Yanchuan Patchwork through this set of works.
- 10) No answer.
- 11) Designer can add more elements and try different design structures.
- 12) I think the idea is good and I especially support the designer.
- 13) I think it will be more characteristic if all this set of tableware is using red as the background color.
- 14) No answer.

Outcome: three of the participants pointed out how could author improve in this design work.

● **Question 5: Do you have any suggestions to the designer?**

- 1) No.
- 2) I hope the designer will continue to work hard on this kind of works.
- 3) No.
- 4) It looks good, but feel like something missing.
- 5) I do not have any comments and suggestions, but I hope everyone can think about it together.
- 6) No.
- 7) I hope designer can design more products through using these elements in the future.
- 8) No.
- 9) I hope the designer can develop herself into different areas.
- 10) No.
- 11) Designer could add more folk style elements and her own design thinking.

- 12) The designer should conduct more communication with famous patchwork artists.
- 13) It will be much better if the traditional patchwork elements could be designed into series of wedding tableware or wedding dresses and so on.
- 14) I am very satisfied with this series of work.

Outcome: almost half of the participants gave suggestions to the designer.

● **Question 6: Have you ever think about design some works that can combine with your own patchworks? Please give example.**

- 1) Yes, but I do not have relevant conditions.
- 2) Yes, I would like to try tailoring clothes through the form of patchwork.
- 3) Yes, I would like to combine my works with the billboards on the street.
- 4) Yes, I would like to make a series of shoes with the Chinese twelve zodiac animals, and design patchwork patterns on clothes or cushions.
- 5) I do have some ideas, but I do not have any methods to find a way. I hope that our leaders, departments and teachers could help each other.
- 6) Yes, I will combine tradition with the Chinese twelve zodiac animals.
- 7) Yes, but I do not have enough works.

- 8) Yes, I would like to design some wallets, pouches and the covers of note books.
- 9) Yes, I would like to design some coasters, quilt covers and so on.
- 10) Not now.
- 11) Yes, such as coasters, tablecloth, chair cushions and so on.
- 12) Not yet, I just came into contact with patchwork in a short time.
- 13) I would like to design my own patterns on some fashion bags or wallets.
- 14) Yes, but it is limited.

Outcome: most of the participants already have their idea on design innovation but few of them have no idea about it.

● **Question 7: Do you want to have more chances to conduct cooperation with designers for propagandize your patchwork in the future?**

- 1) Yes, I hope so.
- 2) Yes, I hope so.
- 3) Of course.

- 4) Yes, I wish I could.
- 5) I used to think to cooperate with more designers to promote my own works, bring our Yanchuan culture from China to the whole world.
- 6) Yes, I hope so.
- 7) Yes, I hope so.
- 8) I have thought about to conduct integration every works with everywhere in our life, such as clothes, furniture, book covers and so on.
- 9) Should be, and it is important for me to cooperate with designers who have something in common.
- 10) Yes, I hope so.
- 11) Yes, I hope so.
- 12) Of course.
- 13) Of course, if I will have a chance.
- 14) Yes, I hope so.

Outcome: all positive responses on the cooperation with designers in the future.

● **Question 8: Will you keep making and creating patchwork in the future?**

- 1) Yes, I will.
- 2) Of course.
- 3) Yes, I will.
- 4) I will keep making it until I died.
- 5) I will keep making patchwork in the future to inherit our culture.
- 6) Yes, I will always insist.
- 7) Yes, I will always insist.
- 8) I will insist making it, because patchwork is a kind of folk art which was created by the Yanchuan people for their long-term work and life.
- 9) Yes, I will.
- 10) Yes, I will insist.
- 11) Yes, I will.
- 12) I have already loved with patchwork and I will insist making it.
- 13) Yes, I will.
- 14) Yes, I will.

Outcome: all positive responses on keep making patchwork.

● **Question 9: Are you willing to inherit your patchwork skills and experiences to other people?**

- 1) Yes, I would like to.
- 2) Yes, I am very willing to.
- 3) Yes, I would like to.
- 4) Yes, the more the better.
- 5) Yes, I would like to. I have already organized some cooperatives in our village and I have many students. I have also organized some training course and wish to inherit what I have learnt to more people.
- 6) Yes, I would like to.
- 7) Yes, I would like to.
- 8) Yes, I would like to. I wish more women can learn more traditional Chinese culture and promote our Yanchuan Patchwork and paper cutting into everywhere.
- 9) Yes, I will.
- 10) Yes, I am very willing to.

11) Yes, I would like to.

12) Yes, I am very willing to.

13) As a teacher I wish to let more people know our handicrafts and I will also try to create good conditions to children and let them love this kind of folk art.

14) Yes, I will.

Outcome: all positive responses on inheriting their skills to others.

5) Relevant Images of Yanchuan Patchwork.

