

# Collection and Appreciation of Minority Art

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**Abstract:** *In today's era, with the improvement of people's living standards, and the rise of all kinds of treasure evaluation and collectible TV programs, the dual influence of media and economy has made more and more people pay attention to collection. Collecting has become an important entertainment and investment means for some people. Among them, in addition to the general collection of traditional cultural relics, jade, gold and silver, the collection of ethnic art is also rising day by day. However, the advanced communication technology and communication means brought by social progress not only changed people's lives, but also created new opportunities and challenges for the development and inheritance of traditional culture and art of ethnic minorities. This article will focus on the collection and appreciation of minority art works, and discuss the value and significance of collection for the protection and inheritance of national traditional culture in the current era.*

**Keywords:** *Collection of ethnic minorities; Protection and inheritance of traditional culture*

## 1. Cultural integration leads to the impact of national culture

In today's society, the more sophisticated the traffic network framework is, the more popular the Internet is, and people have basically achieved communication across spaces. Western civilization has gradually spread to China, and modern civilization has gradually penetrated into the areas where ethnic minorities live. In the process of cultural integration, ethnic minority people's dress, living habits, daily language and so on began to follow the modern patterns. Taking household appliances as an example, for the convenience of life and the reduction of time and money cost, most people use electrical appliances, alloy appliances, porcelain, etc. which are produced in batches, and the wooden utensils and silverware made by traditional handicrafts are less and less. Similarly, the traditional costumes of our own nation have become "collectibles" that are only worn on major festivals.

At the same time, some national artworks with collectible value are not loved and valued by the young people of this nation because of their complicated production process and high design cost. Handicrafts and costumes have also been passed down from generation to generation, designed and produced by hand, and gradually changed into mass production in factories.

Cultural integration has improved the economic level of ethnic minority areas and the living standards of ethnic minority people, but it has gradually devoured the traditional national culture. This kind of cultural blending is more and more gentle, which unconsciously melts the position of traditional culture in the hearts of contemporary young people of ethnic minorities. Wearing jeans, carrying Adidas schoolbag and wearing Nike shoes; No longer use natural materials to paint and write, but use mobile phone and WeChat to communicate; No longer galloping on a red horse, but driving a car. This kind of life seems to us the most normal, but it is also the most worrying. The national culture is weakening year by year, so it is urgent to protect the traditional culture and inherit the national spirit.

## 2. The economic value of collection and the literary value of appreciation

### 2.1. Take "Thangka" as an example to see the economic value of minority art collections.

On April 29th, 2002, at Christie's auction in Hong Kong, a giant embroidery "Embroidered Red Night Demon Thangka" during the Yongle period of the Ming Dynasty was sold for a high price of HK\$ 30.87 million, setting a new high for Asian fabric auctions at that time.

On November 26th, 2014, on the closing day of Christie's Autumn Auction in Hong Kong, a huge Ming Dynasty Yongle Imperial production of "Embroidered Thangka of Red Yama" was sold for HK\$ 348 million.

In just 12 years, the price of Thangka of the same age and size has actually increased by more than

10 times. The value of Thangka in modern times has increased by more than 30 times. A woven painting, 300 million yuan, is incredible to non-professionals, but it is expected to those who know the inside information.

The production of Thangka is complicated, and it takes months or even years, which embodies the unique beliefs and cultural traditions of the Tibetan people and belongs to one of the religious arts. The historical changes and rich cultural implications of a Thangka really determine its cultural value as a cultural and artistic collection. In this billion-dollar era,[1] the market value of Thangka in Tibet is far from catching up with its artistic value and academic status. Senior industry insiders said without hesitation that it is only a matter of time before ancient Thangka boutiques reach billions or even tens of billions.

## **2.2. Appreciation of minority art.**

Professor Gao Runxi of the Academy of Fine Arts of Minzu University of China once wrote, "We should know the background and conditions of the work, the basic artistic concepts related to it, the political, economic and cultural background, the growth environment and social relations of the artist, and collectors, and then we can begin to evaluate the work itself." Collection is not only a steady business investment, but also a cause of in-depth exploration and research on the history and social background of the collection, exploration and dissemination of the culture and spirit contained in the collection.

The collection of minority art itself has a double meaning of material and spirit. On the one hand, it is a commodity bearing historical, cultural and artistic information, and its value changes with the changes of fashion and aesthetic taste, and generally shows an upward trend year by year. On the other hand, it is the material embodiment of national spirit concentration and the refraction of ancient national culture passed down for thousands of years. Compared with material value, this spiritual connotation is more precious, irreplaceable and worthy of advocating.

"Works of art have artistic laws, and cultural products have the value rules of cultural products. The true value of works of art is dominated by the excellent quality and rich connotation of its culture and art. Art is, after all, a cultural product." The collection of minority art is not only a symbol of wealth, but also a symbol of taste and cultivation. The appreciation of collections is not only a means of investment and financial management, but also a kind of elegance and self-cultivation. Therefore, the collection of minority art works is a two-way profit-making undertaking for the collectors themselves (wealth and cultivation) and the spread of minority art.[2]

## **3. The protection and inheritance of minority cultures by collections under the background of the times**

Li Ning has a saying, "The more national it is, the more cosmopolitan it is." As his brand slogan, this sentence fired the first shot for him to enter the international market. The same is true of the collection of minority art works. Minority collections are different from popular mass collections nowadays. Western oil paintings, gold and silver vessels, all kinds of sculptures, cloisonne in China, meticulous ink painting, Suzhou embroidery, etc. are all well known to the public. This kind of goods has gradually reached saturation in the collection market, and even will tend to decline in the future. However, the art works of ethnic minorities are generally still in a period of vigorous development, and the future prospects are optimistic by many domestic and foreign experts.

Secondly, the protection of national culture is not only to preserve the Chinese Millennium tradition, but also to promote the diversity of 56 ethnic groups and carry forward the characteristics of China's traditional culture on the international stage. Under the background of modern market economy, only by putting the collection into the collection market and transforming its cultural value into economic value can the value of the collection be truly discovered.

## **4. Conclusion**

As an ancient culture that has gradually settled down in the long history of the Chinese nation for 5,000 years, the art of ethnic minorities still exists in the primitive form in today's information society and in the farming society that has not been infected by cities. [3]The deepening of urbanization has eroded the origin and inheritance of such ancient culture, and attracted more and more young people to the life of modern cities. National culture is facing the double loss of its origin and inheritors.

Because of the vigorous development of the collection market, artworks have gradually attracted

more people's attention, and ethnic minority artworks have gradually entered the sight of people all over the world. As one of the symbols of China's ancient culture, ethnic minority art provides a convenient and professional way for people to feel the ethnic customs, regardless of costumes or handicrafts. What is missing in the collection today is no longer the convenient commercial channels or the audience with a certain capital base, but the inheritors and promoters of foreign nationalities who really take the initiative to promote and publicize. I believe that as long as someone really persists in the promotion and publicity, unscrambles its cultural charm and excavates its cultural heritage, the market for the collection and appreciation of minority art products will flourish, and the national culture will be known, impressed and admired by the world.

Painting, sculpture, arts and crafts and architectural art of China ethnic minorities. Most of them have their own aesthetic interest, content and form, which are the reflection of social life and customs in their own ethnic areas and are loved by their own people.

In ancient China, minority art was called "Fan ethnic painting". The Song Dynasty began to use this word in "Xuanhe Pictorial Manual". The book holds that "Fan ethnic painting" should emphasize the content of the minority groups' civilization and friendship, respect their local customs and habits, portray their personality characteristics and physical structure, and truthfully describe the costumes with national characteristics, which can reach the level of being tested according to the picture. For the works of the despicable brotherly races, they shall not be recorded in the painting.

All ethnic minorities in China have a long history, rich artistic creations and many famous artists. For example, monk Wei Chiyi, who was born in Khotan in the Tang Dynasty, is well-known in Chang'an painting circle for his paintings with ethnic customs. The map of the king and his relatives, written by him in Feng'en Temple in Chang'an, praised the spirit of the times of friendly exchanges between all ethnic groups in Khotan and the Han ethnic group. His paintings are vivid and touching with the figures of the western regions, especially the painting skills of "concave and convex flowers" and "bending iron coils", which represent the special style of Khotan art with high cultural level. Huguī was an excellent painter of Shiwei people at the end of the Tang Dynasty. His works, as shown in the Xuanhe Painting Manual, are all scenes of nomadic life. Mei Yaochen, a poet in the Song Dynasty, once wrote a poem in Huguī's "The Picture of Hu People Dismounting Horses": "Felt huts stand around the tent, but the drums and horns are not blown to startle the **swan goose**." From the artistic conception, we can imagine the heroic and majestic images of brotherly nation. Huguī was the first painter to create with Zhuo Xie as the content, and Zhuo Xie Painting, which was handed down from generation to generation, was once considered by Gao Shiqi in Qing Dynasty to be "a complete imitation of painting and music". In Song Dynasty, Liu Daochun said that he could "capable of composing the picturesque scenery outside the Great Wall", and "scenery beyond the Great Wall" was Huguī's unique artistic style. Yelupei, a painter in Liao Dynasty, was a native of Khitan. His works are rooted in life and full of profound national interest. "Eight Banners Painting Record" specially lists many minority painters, who compete with each other and stand out in the painting world.

China ancient minority art vividly recorded the social life of all ethnic groups at that time. There are many artistic works in the tomb of Rong ethnic group in Luanping County during the Spring and Autumn Period, which are rich in the characteristics of nomadic grassland people. There are ornaments composed of bronze earrings, sapphire tubes, agates, green pine stones, etc., and decorations with animal images, such as crouching tigers, prostrate frogs and dogs, rectangular animal patterns, etc. The materials of these works are related to people's preferences for objective things in the process of material production. Many nomadic people in the north take animal prints as their artistic features. For example, they like to use animal images with individual characteristics as their main decorative content on bronze vessels, which reflects their aesthetic consciousness in a specific social life. Jinning, Yunnan, was a place where the ancient Dian people lived in compact communities during the Qin and Han Dynasties. The bronze wares found there, with the theme of people, portrayed nearly 300 people wearing different national costumes. Some of the characters are killing slaves, killing cattle to sacrifice bronze drums and columns, and some are capturing slaves in the war, and some are dancing in the style of praying for the New Year, and some are offering food and tribute to the nobles. These pictures reflect some aspects of the historical development and social life of ethnic minorities in southwest China.

Minority art is based on the traditional spiritual culture of the nation. Tibetans in China have unique beliefs and cultural traditions. Their scroll painting "Thangka" belongs to religious art. There is a single "Thangka" and several complete sets of "Thangka". Its form of expression has a fixed formula, in which color plays an important role in expressing the gods. For example, the solemn appearance of the gods is expressed in black with a golden background, which is called "Golden Thangka". White is used to show the gentle appearance of God; show God's angry face in red and dark blue. Emphasizing the artistic effect of painting with color is consistent in Tibetan murals, arts and crafts and architectural arts. This is the unique imagination of Tibetan painters and constitutes the unique style of Tibetan art. Another example is the Kuqa area in Xinjiang, where people of all ethnic groups in Ancient Tunes of

Qiuci have created a rich and splendid Buddhist culture. Their works are mainly based on music and dance in real life, which not only shows the realm of Buddhism, but also erases the mystery of Buddhism. Formally, as far as the portrait of a bodhisattva is concerned, it is beautiful in shape, graceful in posture, dignified and quiet in image, and appears elegant. In particular, the rich half-naked or full-naked body art, in the ever-changing form and expression, shows that Kucha painters can recognize and express the contrast between youth and aging in real life, and reproduce the rhythm and strength of nature through body art. This shows that the Kucha people are endowed with a clear character, which can show such vivid art with rich life and romantic atmosphere.

In the multi-ethnic areas adjacent to each other, the fine arts of all ethnic groups have both commonness and individuality. For example, most ancient nationalities in Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi and Hunan had bronze drum art. There are rich animal patterns on the bronze drum, such as Chinese alligator, frog, egret, cow, tiger, etc. There are scenes that reflect social customs, such as boating and racing, dancing with feathered swords, killing cattle and sacrificial ceremonies, all of which are common features of all ethnic groups in the south. A bronze drum in Xilin, Guangxi is engraved with patterns with the theme of egret, boat race and feather men, which is similar to the bronze drum patterns in Yunnan and Guizhou. The decorative techniques of bronze drum art, from abstract and distorted patterns to realistic patterns, especially the quadrilateral continuous geometric patterns of oblique rhombus, have had a profound impact on the printing of Dai brocade, Zhuang brocade, Tujia ethnic group, and batik art of Miao ethnic group and Bouyei ethnic group, and have distinct commonalities compared with traditional local culture.

There are many famous traces of minority art, such as flower mountain mural of Zhuang ethnic group, Jianchuan grottoes of Bai ethnic group, Yinshan rock paintings of northern nomads, mural painting in tomb chamber of Koguryo, and architectural art of shelter bridge of Dong ethnic group, all of which are famous for their unique national styles and are brilliant pearls in China's cultural treasure house.

After the founding of People's Republic of China, the art of ethnic minorities has made new progress. After the training and education in institutions of higher learning, a team of ethnic minority fine arts professionals has initially formed, and there are some experts, professors, painters and batik masters. They inherited the traditional art heritage and developed their own art. For example, new creations have been made on batik art of Miao ethnic group and won praise in international cultural exchanges.

In the Dong county of Guizhou and Guangxi, there are many famous drum towers and shelter bridges. These ancient buildings, which flourished from the end of Han dynasty to the Tang Dynasty, are rigorous in structure, unique in shape and full of national temperament. The whole building does not require a single nail, a rivet, and other iron pieces, and it is all made of durable Chinese fir and birch, rising from the ground. Shelter Bridge, also known as Flower Bridge, is one of the most distinctive folk buildings in Dong architecture.

Hmong Villages like to stand by the mountain, while Dong villages are mostly built on both sides of rivers and streams, living across the water. Therefore, there are stone arch bridges, stone slab bridges and bamboo bridge in Dong villages. The shelter bridge is the most national characteristic. Chengyang Bridge, located in Ma'an village, Linxi Township, Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, Guangxi, is the representative of Shelter Bridge. Because there are corridors and pavilions on the bridge, it is not only feasible for people, but also can shelter from wind and rain, so it is called shelter bridge. This is a wooden beam bridge with four holes, five piers, and semi-girder. Its structure is mainly composed of pier and bridge body. The pier bottom is paved with raw pine wood, and the diamond-shaped pier seat is built with putty-bonded stone. Several layers of giant sequoia logs are laid on top of it, and then wooden boards are laid as the bridge deck, and the bridge deck is covered with tiled long corridor. The bridge is a four-column building, with several tiled roofs and several stories of cornices on the top of the bridge, which are beautiful and spectacular. There are pagoda-shaped and palace-shaped bridge pavilions on each of the five stone piers, which are staggered and magnificent. There are carvings and paintings on the eaves of the promenade and the pavilion. The figures, landscapes, flowers and animals are vivid, which is the crystallization of the wisdom of the people in Dong county and the artistic treasure of Chinese wooden buildings.

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