

A Study of Dai-Thai Food and Cultural Views: a Perspective on Dai-Thai Rice-Planting Proverbs

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Abstract: This study takes Dai-Thai food culture as the theme and takes Dai-Thai rice proverbs as the perspective, aiming to explore the characteristics of food culture and the cultural connotation of rice proverbs in Dai-Thai area. Through the collection and analysis of food customs, food culture inheritance and rice proverbs in Dai and Thai areas, it is revealed that Dai and Thai people attach importance to food and have a unique understanding of rice cultivation. It is found that Dai and Thai food culture is rich and diverse, including rich kinds of ingredients, unique cooking methods and unique eating customs. As an oral tradition, Dai-Tai rice proverbs bear rich farming culture and wisdom, reflecting Dai-Tai people's attention to rice cultivation and their wisdom summary of life. This study provides a new perspective and research method for a deeper understanding of Dai-Tai food culture, which is of great significance for the protection and inheritance of Dai-Tai food culture.

Keywords: Dai-Tai; Rice proverbs; Food Culture

1. Introduction

Located in Yunan Province, China, the Dai-Tai region is a multi-ethnic area, in which the Dai and Thai populations are the most concentrated. The food culture in Daitai area is rich and diverse, and it is famous for its unique ingredients, cooking methods and eating customs. Rice farming plays an important role in the farming culture of Dai and Thai areas. As an oral tradition, rice proverbs carry rich farming wisdom and cultural connotation.

The background of this study is that the food culture and rice proverbs in Dai and Tai areas are facing the risk of loss and neglect in modern society. With the process of modernization, the food customs in Dai and Tai areas are gradually influenced by western food culture, and the traditional cooking methods and ingredients are gradually forgotten. At the same time, as an oral tradition, rice proverbs are also facing the risk of disappearing gradually due to the change of information dissemination mode and the lack of interest of the younger generation in traditional culture.

Therefore, the significance of this study is to promote the protection and inheritance of traditional culture in Dai and Thai areas through the study of Dai and Thai food culture and rice proverbs. First of all, the study of Dai-Thai food culture can help us understand the human history, social structure and lifestyle of the region, and help to enhance cultural identity and respect for Dai-Thai region. Secondly, by studying rice proverbs, we can excavate and inherit the wisdom summary and farming culture of Dai and Thai people, and provide local farmers with the inheritance of farming experience and knowledge. In addition, the results of this study can also provide reference for the development of tourism and cultural industries and contribute to the sustainable development of Daitai area.

In short, this study aims to explore the characteristics and values of traditional culture in Dai-Tai region through the study of Dai-Tai food culture and rice proverbs, promote the protection and inheritance of traditional culture in Dai-Tai region, and provide support and reference for the sustainable development of Dai-Tai region.

2. The characteristics and traditions of Dai and Thai food culture

As the Chinese saying goes, "Food is the priority of the people", and rice planting is one of the

important economic activities of the Dai Tai people, which provides a source of food and is closely related to the local diet culture. Diet habits are an early and deep-rooted cultural acquisition of humans. The perceptions and experiences of both peoples regarding rice planting and diet are reflected in the Dai-Thai rice-planting proverbs. Since ancient times, Thailand has had a long history of farming, mature farming techniques, and a variety of rice varieties. As a result, Thailand has always focused on and supported agricultural production. Thai agriculture benefits not only from favourable natural conditions such as flat terrain, fertile soil, simultaneous rain and heat and monsoon climate but also from its dense population and abundant labour force; long history of cultivation and rich experienced farming; in addition to the Thai people's preference for rice, which creates a supply and demand relationship.^[1]

On the other hand, the Dai people mainly live in subtropical dam areas with good natural conditions, abundant rainfall, warm and hot climate, and a long history of traditional rice-planting agriculture. Rice is the main crop of the Dai people, so the staple food of their diet culture is rice. In layman's terms, diet is the developmental needs of a people in a social environment and is formed by a combination of factors such as geography, climate and social and historical development. Dai Tai rice-planting proverbs can significantly reflect a person's inherent dietary style and preferences, and the main dietary categories are as follows.

The food culture in Daitai region is an important part of its rich and diverse national culture, with unique characteristics and traditions. The following will introduce the characteristics and traditions of Dai and Thai food culture in detail.

Located at the junction of subtropical zone and tropical zone, Daitai region has humid climate and fertile soil, which is suitable for the growth of crops. Therefore, the food culture in this area is dominated by crops, especially rice, corn and beans. In addition, the Daitai area is also characterized by rich ingredients such as fruits, vegetables and game.

The cooking methods in Daitai area are unique, mainly including steaming, boiling, frying, frying and baking. Among them, steaming is the most commonly used cooking method of Dai and Thai people, and the original flavor and nutritional value of ingredients can be maintained through cooking. Cooking is to cook the ingredients in a pot, which is often used to make soup and cook vegetables. The cooking in Daitai area is famous for its accurate cooking, good color, aroma and taste. The commonly used cooking methods are frying, frying and frying. Frying is to fry the ingredients in an oil pan to make crispy and delicious food. Roasting is to roast the ingredients on the fire to make them more rich in flavor.

There are many unique food customs in Daitai area, such as Harvest Festival and Water-splashing Festival. During the harvest festival, people will hold a grand banquet to worship the harvested crops to thank the earth for its gift. Water-splashing Festival is a traditional festival of Dai people. People will splash water on each other, symbolizing washing away the troubles of one year and welcoming the arrival of the new year.

The food culture in Daitai area has been passed down from generation to generation and is an important part of family and community. The elders in the family will pass on cooking skills and traditional dishes to their descendants, maintaining the continuation of the food culture. At the same time, traditional cooking competitions and food festivals will be held in the community to promote the inheritance and development of food culture. In a word, the food culture in Daitai area is characterized by rich and varied ingredients, unique cooking methods and traditional food customs. This unique food culture not only satisfies people's appetite, but also embodies the Dai and Thai people's treasure of food and unique understanding of life. Under the impact of modernization, it is particularly important to protect and inherit the food culture of Dai and Tai, so as to ensure the inheritance and development of this precious cultural heritage.

3. Collection and collation of Dai-Tai rice proverbs

3.1 Definition and characteristics of rice proverbs

Rice proverbs refer to short sentences or aphorisms about the wisdom summary and experience sharing of rice farming in the folk oral tradition in Dai and Tai areas. They express people's understanding of rice cultivation and induction of life wisdom in concise and vivid language, and have strong national characteristics and cultural connotations.

Rice proverbs usually express the characteristics of rice farming and the wisdom of farming in vivid language, which makes it easier for people to understand and remember. Rice proverbs express profound meaning in concise language, and convey rich information through a small number of words, making it easy to spread and inherit. Rice proverbs are not only descriptions of rice farming, but also contain rich philosophy and wisdom of life, reflecting the Dai and Thai people's thinking about life and awe of nature. As an oral tradition, rice proverbs are passed down from generation to generation, bearing the rich farming culture and wisdom in Dai and Tai areas, and are an important part of cultural inheritance.^[2]

3.2 Methods and process of collecting rice proverbs of Dai and Tai

Before studying Dai-Tai rice proverbs, it is necessary to determine the appropriate methods and processes to collect these proverbs.

Field investigation is one of the important ways to collect rice proverbs of Dai and Thai. Researchers can go to farmland, villages and farmers in Dai-Tai area for field investigation, have in-depth exchanges with local farmers and record their oral rice proverbs. Through close contact with farmers, we can get more real and rich proverbs.

Rice proverbs in Dai and Tai areas may have been recorded in various documents, including folklore, folk culture books, historical documents and so on. Researchers can find and sort out the contents of rice proverbs by consulting relevant literature. These documents can not only provide the written expression of proverbs, but also provide researchers with the background and cultural connotation of proverbs.

In addition to field investigation, oral interview is also an important means to collect rice proverbs of Dai and Tai. Through face-to-face communication with elders, farmers and inheritors of traditional culture in Dai and Tai areas, researchers can get more rice proverbs and understand the background and significance of proverbs. When conducting oral interviews, researchers should pay attention to protecting the privacy of the respondents and respecting local cultural customs.

With the development of Internet, social media and network resources have become new ways to collect rice proverbs. Through search engines, social media platforms and professional websites, researchers can find forums, blogs and communities related to food culture in Daitai area. On these platforms, people may share their understanding and use of rice proverbs, and researchers can collect more rice proverbs resources through interaction with netizens.

3.3 Classification and collation of rice proverbs

As a part of oral tradition in Dai and Thai areas, rice proverbs have rich cultural connotations and wisdom. In this chapter, we will classify and sort out Dai-Tai rice proverbs in order to better understand their characteristics and significance.

In the classification of rice proverbs, they can be divided according to the topics involved. For example, proverbs about farming techniques can be classified as farming techniques, proverbs about rice harvest can be classified as harvest blessing, and proverbs about rice cultivation and life can be classified as life wisdom. By sorting out and analyzing proverbs with different themes, we can deeply understand the Dai and Thai people's cognition and attitude towards rice cultivation.

Rice proverbs are also diverse in language form. Some proverbs use rhyming forms, such as "food is not left, salt is not corroded" and "rice is hard to find, but betel nut is expensive"; Some proverbs use dual forms, such as "eating fish costs rice, drinking costs delicacies" and "There are fish in the water and rice in the field"; There are also proverbs in the form of metaphors and symbols, such as "mouse poop spoils a pot of rice". By classifying and sorting out the language forms of proverbs, we can reveal the expression and thinking mode of Dai and Thai people on rice farming.^[3]

Rice proverbs contain rich cultural connotations and reflect the values and wisdom of the Dai and Thai people. It can be classified according to the cultural connotation conveyed by proverbs, such as awe and gratitude for nature, love and labor spirit for farming life, and blessing and expectation for harvest and happiness. Through the classification and arrangement of cultural connotation, we can deeply explore the cultural tradition and spiritual world of Dai and Thai people.

4. The relationship between Dai and Thai food culture and rice proverbs

As an oral tradition, rice proverbs bear the Dai and Thai people's attention to rice cultivation and their wisdom summary of life. In Dai and Thai food culture, rice proverbs have played a role of reflection and inheritance. They are not only simple oral expressions, but also a profound reflection and summary of food culture.

First of all, rice proverbs reflect the importance that Dai and Thai people attach to rice cultivation and the inheritance of farming culture. Daitai area is a developed farming culture area, and rice is the main crop of local people. Rice proverbs convey the Dai and Thai people's awe and gratitude for rice cultivation through concise and philosophical language. For example, the proverb "Fields depend on ditches, people depend on hard work" expresses the importance of rice cultivation and farmers' dependence on rice cultivation.

Secondly, rice proverbs reflect the characteristics and customs of Dai and Thai food culture. The Dai and Thai people take rice as their staple food, and rice planting proverbs often involve rice planting, harvesting, processing and cooking. The proverb "Ten haobeng can't make a lump of sticky rice." emphasizes the status of rice as the main grain. In addition, rice proverbs also involve the diet customs and cooking methods of Dai and Thai people. Through the inheritance of proverbs, people can learn about the rich and varied ingredients and unique cooking skills in Dai and Thai areas.

In addition, rice proverbs also reflect the Dai and Thai people's summary and inheritance of life wisdom. Proverbs contain rich farming experience and life wisdom. Rice proverbs convey wisdom to future generations through concise and vivid language, so that they can better cope with various challenges in life.

5. Protection and inheritance of Dai-Tai food culture

In this section, the importance and methods of how to protect and inherit Dai-Tai food culture are mainly discussed. First of all, it expounds the protection significance of Dai-Thai food culture, and points out that food culture is an important cultural heritage of Dai-Thai people, which is of great significance for maintaining national identity and inheriting traditional wisdom. Secondly, the protection methods of food culture are introduced, including strengthening the research and recording of food culture, popularizing Dai and Thai traditional ingredients and cooking skills, and carrying out relevant education and publicity activities. Finally, it discusses the inheritance and innovation of rice proverbs, emphasizes the importance of rice proverbs as an oral tradition, and puts forward the need to popularize and inherit rice proverbs through the combination of oral inheritance and modern media. This section aims to provide ideas and methods for the protection and inheritance of Dai and Thai food culture, so as to ensure the inheritance and development of this precious cultural heritage.^[4]

Food culture is a unique cultural symbol of a nation or region. Protecting food culture is helpful to inherit and carry forward the unique culture of the nation. Food culture is a part of people's identity, and protecting food culture is helpful to enhance social cohesion and identity. Food culture is closely related to the local ecological environment, and protecting food culture is helpful to promote sustainable development and environmental protection.

By collecting and sorting out relevant cultural materials, documents and oral history, the history and development process of food culture are recorded and protected. Traditional skills such as cooking skills and production techniques in food culture need to be inherited and protected, and can be passed on to future generations through training and apprenticeship. Food culture is closely related to food resources. Protecting local unique food resources and avoiding over-exploitation and destruction are important links to protect food culture. Through education and publicity activities, we will raise the public's awareness and attention to food culture, enhance the awareness of protection, and promote the inheritance and development of food culture.

Through the above protection significance and methods of food culture, we can effectively promote the protection and inheritance of Dai and Thai food culture, protect the unique food culture in Dai and Thai areas, and let more people understand and appreciate Dai and Thai food and culture. At the same time, the protection of food culture also needs the joint efforts and attention of all walks of life, strengthen cooperation and exchanges, and jointly promote the inheritance and development of food culture.

Through the research on the inheritance and innovation of rice proverbs, we can promote the in-depth understanding and protection of Dai and Thai food culture. Inheriting Dai and Thai rice proverbs can preserve the wisdom and values of farming culture, while innovation can make rice proverbs adapt to the needs and changes of modern society. The combination of inheritance and innovation provides a new path and possibility for the sustainable development of Dai and Thai food culture.

6. The inheritance and changes of Dai-Tai food culture

6.1 Inheritance of Dai-Tai Food Culture

The inheritance and change of Dai and Thai food culture is an important research direction. Through the investigation and interview in Daitai area, we can understand the changes of food culture between tradition and modernity. On the one hand, Dai-Thai food culture has been gradually impacted in modern society, and some traditional food customs and cooking skills are in danger of being lost. On the other hand, some people's re-understanding and promotion of Dai-Tai food culture also provides new opportunities for its inheritance.

Daitai food culture is not only a way of life, but also a manifestation of culture. Through the study of Dai-Thai food culture, we can better understand the attitude, values and wisdom of Dai-Thai people. At the same time, Dai-Tai food culture also plays an important role in promoting the development of local economy and tourism. Protecting and inheriting Dai-Thai food culture can not only promote the prosperity of local economy, but also help to enhance the confidence and spread of local culture.^[5]

6.2 Enlightenment and prospect for the study of rice proverbs in Dai and Thai.

In the future research, we can further explore the similarities and differences between the rice proverbs of Dai and Tai and those of other regions, compare the characteristics of food culture and rice proverbs in different regions, and broaden the research horizon. In addition, we can also explore the linguistic features and expressions of rice proverbs in Dai and Thai, and deeply study their relationship with languages and dialects in Dai and Thai areas. Through continuous deepening research, we can better understand the unique charm of Dai-Tai food culture and rice proverbs, and make greater contributions to the protection and inheritance of Dai-Tai food culture.

7. Conclusion

As the English philosopher Ferencie and S. Bacon said, "Proverbs are derived from nature, labour, and human cognition." They are simple and profound truths expressed in easy-to-understand, familiar, and universal metaphors, which have been passed down from mouth to mouth. The food categories, practices and cultural connotations of food in the Dai-Thai rice-planting proverbs are inextricably linked, and they are interdependent and interact. From our statistical analysis of the rice-planting proverbs, the standard features of the Dai-Thai ethnic group are more significant than the different features, which provides a strong argument for the view that the Dai-Thai ethnic group is homogenous. Since geography and climate are the decisive factors for the differences in dietary categories, dietary customs are determined by dietary categories, the cultural connotation of food is determined by dietary customs, and dietary ideology guides the people in their dietary choices. Studying this paper will help people further deepen their understanding and knowledge of Dai-Thai rice planting proverbs and food culture, broaden their horizons, promote the development and spread of food culture in China and Thailand, and promote cross-cultural communication between China and Thailand. Studying Dai-Thai rice-planting proverbs will be more helpful for future generations to explore the two nations' cultures.

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