

### A Brief Analysis of the Symbolic Significance and Cultural Continuity of Qiang Horn Flower Pattern

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Abstract: Based on Freud's theory, this paper discusses the symbolism of the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese Qiang embroidery and cultural continuity. The Qiang horn flower pattern is an iconic cultural symbol of the Chinese Oiang people's worship of nature, their hopes for life ideals and their desire for their life reproduction, which is in line with Freud's theory of life instinct. In Chinese Qiang embroidery, the crochet Qiang horn flower pattern is a symbol of the Qiang culture, an expression of deep knowledge of nature and humanism. During the evolution of the times, the Qiang people have skillfully applied the theory of defence mechanism proposed by Freud, and through and modernized personalized artistic innovation, made the embroidery pattern of the Chinese Qiang people realize the sublimation and regeneration on the basis of maintaining the traditional symbols. Faced with modern cultural influences, the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery shows a strong psychological defence mechanism and cultural regenerative ability, so that the Qiang cultural genes can be expanded and inherited with the changing times. The research of this paper not only reveals the profound symbolic meaning and psychodynamic display of Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery, but also shows its indispensable core status and lasting influence in Chinese Qiang cultural vein, providing some theoretical insights and practical revelations for research on intangible cultural heritage protection and inheritance.

Keywords: Chinese Qiang Embroidery; Qiang Horn Flower Pattern; Symbolism; Freud Theory; Cultural Continuation

#### 1. Introduction

Freud's psychoanalytic theory provides a valuable perspective for exploring the inner dynamics of human unconscious psychology, symbols, and cultural inheritance. This study focuses on the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery, aiming to reveal its symbolism and lasting continuity in Qiang culture through the lens of Freudian theory. Qiang horn flower pattern holds significant importance in Qiang embroidery, representing the Qiang people's reverence for their desire for fertility reproduction, and their longing for family harmony and love [1]. These symbolic meanings are closely related to Freud's concept of Eros (instinct of life) and reflect the psychological needs of the collective unconscious deeply rooted in Qiang culture. Qiang horn flower pattern demonstrates how traditional Chinese cultural symbols adapt and transform to face social changes and modern cultural challenges. Drawing on Freud's theory of defence mechanisms, Chinese embroidery artists have achieved a regeneration and sublimation of the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern while maintaining its traditional symbolic meaning. This has been achieved through personalisation and modernisation of artistic expression, ensuring cultural continuity. Therefore, this paper applies Freudian theory to further analyse the symbolic meaning of the ram's horn flower motif in Qiang embroidery, to explore its development and change in the vein of Qiang culture, and how this cultural symbol has enabled the expansion and inheritance of the Qiang cultural genes in the time through of the internal psychological dynamics and social and cultural practices. The deepening of symbolic expression and cultural continuity in Chinese Qiang culture provides new theoretical perspectives and practical insights for the study of the protection and inheritance of China's intangible cultural heritage.



# 2. The Symbolic Significance of the Chinese Qiang Horn Flower Pattern

This article examines the symbolism of the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese Qiang embroidery based on Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which is a response at the unconscious level to the deep psychological images and collective emotions of Chinese Qiang culture. The Qiang horn pattern is an important symbol in Chinese Qiang culture and will be explored in the following aspects:

### 2.1 Symbols of Love and Desire

The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery art expresses the love and desire of the Chinese Qiang people. At the level of symbolism, it reflects the influence of Freud's unconscious mental structures on human behaviour and artistic expression, the hidden desires, emotions and fantasies of the individual or collective unconscious [2].

Freud's theory suggests that human desire and love play a significant role in unconscious mental activity. The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery is a symbol in Qiang culture, particularly in love and marriage, representing emotions and desires. instance,in Chinese Oiang embroidery folktales and myths, the Qiang horn flower pattern is often associated with love and marriage. One such legend is 'The Marriage of the White Ram's Horns', where the Qiang horn flower pattern is considered a symbol of true love bestowed by the gods, representing the emotional bond between men and women and the promise of marriage [3]. This is consistent with Freud's theory that 'libido' is the fundamental expression of human psyche and culture. This statement is in accordance with Freud's perspective on libido as a fundamental manifestation in both human psychology and culture.

The Qiang horn flower pattern also symbolises Qiang women's longing and striving for a good love life and their loyalty to their spouses, which is reflected in Qiang costumes and embroidery, such as "the Qiang horn flower blossoms eighteen times, the girl is eighteen and has no love for her brother, and if there is an older brother to help her, she would like to become a happy pair" and so on. The Qiang horn flower pattern is also a symbol of Qiang women's longing and striving for a good love

life, as well as their loyalty to their spouses [4]. They all reveal the strong expectation of love and the beautiful desire for marriage in the inner emotional world of Chinese Qiang women, consistent with Freud's view of the individual's intrinsic need for love and partnership in the growth process.

# 2.2 Symbols of Primitive Worship and Psychological Defence Mechanisms

The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery embodies the symbolism and psychological defence mechanism of primitive worship in Freudian theory. Primitive worship represents mankind's reverence for and supernatural forces, reliance on psychological defence mechanisms are selfprotective strategies unconsciously adopted by individuals in the face of potential threats or internal conflicts. The Qiang horn flower motif is a pattern of primitive Qiang worship, reflected in the sanctification of the animal, the White rams.In the Qiang culture of China, White rams are seen as blood relatives, as totems, and as symbols of the gods [5], the Qiang horn flower pattern is the focus of this worship. Qiang myths and folktales invest it with supreme blessing and protection, echoing Freud's theory of 'Totem Worship' in early human societies, manifesting the collective unconscious deep reverence for ancestors, natural forces and transcendent entities.

The psychological defence mechanism of the Qiang people is reflected in the Qiang horn flower pattern of Chinese embroidery. In the face of natural disasters, social changes and other uncertainties, the Chinese Oiang people use it as a symbol of good luck and a symbol of evil spirits. It expresses their longing for a peaceful and tranquil life and protection against misfortune and disaster. This is in keeping with Freud's psychological defences such as 'alternative gratification' and 'symbolic expression'. Through the use of artistic creations and symbols, the Oiang women transform their unconscious fears and anxieties into positive psychological energy and visions for their lives.

#### 2.3 Life Extension and Blessing Symbols

The crocheted flower pattern in Chinese Qiang embroidery symbolises the continuation of life and blessings, reflecting the inner unconscious psychological needs and the continuation of



the cultural heritage of the Chinese Qiang people. The symbolism of the Ram's Horn Flower in Qiangese culture encompasses a wide range of meanings, such as procreation, family continuity and the desire for happiness, which are all related to Freudian theories of human instinctual desire, life instinct (Eros) and symbolic thought.

Qiang horn flower pattern motifs in Chinese embroidery are closely related to Qiang myths and legends about the origin and continuation of life. For example, the Qiang horn flower pattern blossom branch in "The Genesis of A Bu Qu Ge" symbolises the birth of man, reflecting Freud's research into the origins of life and man's instinctive drive to reproduce life. Therefore, the growth, flowering and fruiting of the Qiang horn flower pattern is like the conception, birth and growth of human life, and the symbolism of this life cycle is visualised through the art of embroidery.

Qiang horn flower pattern is often closely associated with the themes of marriage, family and the continuation of the Qiang bloodline in the folk tales and everyday life of the Qiang people in China. For example, in the story "The Marriage of White Rams", the Qiang horn flower pattern is a symbol of a good marriage. The Qiang horn flower pattern motif conveys the Qiang people's deep expectations and blessings for the continuation of the Qiang bloodline, in line with Freud's ideas about family relationships, parent-child relationships and human social instincts.

As a symbol of good luck and happiness, the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern reflects the Chinese Qiang people's wish for a better life and their blessings for the future. It is often found on Qiang people's clothes, festival decorations and household utensils. The Qiang people in China express their wishes and ideals of happiness through the crocheting of Qiang horn flower pattern. This reflects the psychological comfort and balance of the Qiang people, and it can be argued that this practice is consistent with Freud's theory of 'wish fulfilment' at the unconscious level of the human being.

#### 2.4 Life Cycles and Symbols of Growth

In Freudian psychoanalytic theory, symbolism is a major manifestation of unconscious mental activity that projects an individual's internal psychological conflicts, desires, fears and hopes onto particular symbolic objects [6]. The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery has a special status in Qiang culture, which is closely related to the practical view and life cycle of the Qiang people. According to Qiang legend, the annual blossoming and fading of the Qiang horn flower symbolises the flow of time and the cycle of life, which is in keeping with Freud's emphasis on the instincts to live (Eros) and to die (Thanatos). For example, in the story "The Third Daughter of the God, Mu JieZhu", the time when the Qiang horn flower blooms corresponds to the time when the protagonist, Mu JieZhu, is growing, and the blooming of each Qiang horn flower marks each important stage in the protagonist's life cycle, all expressed as stage symbols of the process of individual psychological development.

Qiang embroidery has become an important symbol of skill training and psychological maturity for Chinese Qiang women, who learn to embroider from childhood. This process corresponds to Freud's theory of individual psychological development, in particular to the stage of the 'identity crisis of adolescence'. Through the process of learning and mastering embroidery skills, the embroidered flower represents the self-identity and cognition of a young Chinese Qiang girl completing her transformation from girl to woman.

# 2.5 Symbol of Cultural Heritage and Collective Memory

The crocheted floral pattern in Chinese Qiang embroidery carries multiple connotations and meanings, serving as a symbol of cultural heritage and collective memory. widespread use and continuity of the Qiang horn flower patter in Chinese Qiang culture is examined with confidence and authority in this study [7], in the process of being passed down from generation to generation and with the development of the times, it has become engraved in the collective consciousness of the Qiang people as a cultural symbol and sign. An extension of Freud's concept of the 'collective unconscious'. the idea of a psychological structure among a particular group of individuals.

The Qiang horn flower pattern carries the collective memory of the historical myths, customs and philosophy of life of the Chinese Qiang people, telling of the history and culture



of the Qiang people, and is widely used in Qiang costumes, home furnishings, sacrificial rites and more. The Qiang horn flower pattern represents Chinese Qiang myths, marriage customs and blessing ceremonies, and is a formal and symbolic continuation and inheritance of the historical and spiritual core of Chinese Qiang culture.

Dreams and symbols, according to Freud, are a direct expression of unconscious mental activity. The Qiang horn flower pattern clearly represents the collective memory of the Qiang people in China, masterfully depicting natural scenes from their lives while reflecting their deep-seated and unconscious psyche. The Qiang horn flower design symbolises the Qiang people's deep reverence for their ancestors and their homeland, and their aspiration for harmonious coexistence and a better life.

The evolution and innovation of the crocheted Oiang horn flower pattern in Chinese Oiang embroidery is a manifestation of the Qiang minority culture's psychological defence mechanism to cope with social change, and a practical application of Freud's theory of "sublimation". The Qiang people of China have successfully preserved and transformed the embedded meaning and symbolism of the Qiang horn flower pattern, despite the impact of modern culture on their traditional way of life. In order to preserve the cultural identity of the Qiang minority, while at the same time satisfying contemporary aesthetics and market demands, we need to ensure that it meets the aesthetic and functional requirements of the present day.

### 3. Cultural Continuity of the Crocheted Flower Pattern of Chinese Qiang Embroidery

Freud's psychoanalytic theory reveals the profound influence of the human unconscious on individual behaviour and cultural expression. As an important symbol of the Qiang minority culture in China, the cultural continuum of Qiang embroidery is analysed in the following dimensions:

#### 3.1 Consolidating and Updating Symbols

In Qiang culture, the Qiang horn flower pattern has a long history, implying not only various meanings such as love, marriage, reproduction and well-being, but also the Qiang people's awareness and respect for the values of nature, life, family and harmony. The inheritance and use of Chinese Qiang embroidery not only incorporates Qiang cultural traditions in China, but also reflects the enduring influence of Freudian theories of unconscious memory and symbolic expression as a form of cultural continuity passed down through time in the collective unconscious.

The crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern is the most traditional pattern in the traditional culture of the Qiang minority in China. With the development of innovative design concepts and techniques, Qiang embroiderers have given it new forms and connotations. For example, to better suit modern aesthetics and market demands, the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern is combined with other modern design elements, abstracted and geometrically processed in expressive techniques. The initial instinctive impulses and emotions of the Qiang people in China are creatively transformed into socially acceptable products, giving new vitality to traditional symbols in a new cultural context and contributing to the concept of "sublimation", which is more in line with Freud's psychological defence mechanism [8].

# 3.2 Intergenerational Transmission of Cultural Memory

Freud proposed that individual memories do not exist in isolation, but are intertwined with the collective memories of families and communities to form an unconscious psychological structure that is inherited across generations. The crocheted floral pattern in Chinese Oiang embroidery is not only depicting the natural landscape, but also symbolizing the collective memory of ancestors, traditional customs, myths and legends of the Qiang ethnic group. Freud's emphasis on the influence of the unconscious individual behaviour and inheritance, the Qiang women's transmission of embroidery from generation to generation, the mythic tales, cultural allegories and philosophical ideas about life behind the ram's horn flower through tattooing, all these elements are part of the process by which the collective unconscious turns tattooing into a visual art form of fixation that transcends time and space, linking the past, present and future of the Qiang people in China.

Symbolism is an important medium for human



psychological activities, and as a symbol that continues and strengthens in every generation of the Qiang people, the crocheted flower pattern is not only a symbol of love, fertility, happiness and other beautiful symbols in the hearts of the Qiang people. It is also the core symbol of Chinese Qiang culture, which helps the Qiang people to build and maintain their identity and emotional attachment to their own culture through intergenerational inheritance. It is also the core symbol of Chinese Qiang culture.

Symbolism plays a crucial role in human psychological activity, and this Qiang flower pattern is a symbol which is passed down through generations. It is a core symbol of Chinese Qiang culture and a symbol of love, fertility and happiness for the Qiang people. The Qiang have successfully maintained their cultural identity and emotional attachment through intergenerational transmission of cultural practices.

Freud's psychological defence mechanism is dynamic, embodying the core values of the traditional Qiang horn flower pattern. Through the mechanism of sublimation, they are converted into new forms and content more suited to modern society. In order to meet the aesthetic demands and cultural environment of the new era, Chinese Qiang women innovated and developed the Qiang horn flower as a cultural symbol.

## 3.3 Adapting and Rebuilding Influenced by Modern Culture

Despite the influence of modern diversified culture, the symbolic significance of the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern in Qiang embroidery remains unchanged. The original symbolic connotations of love, marriage and reproduction have been further enriched by the collision of modern aesthetic concepts and values. Freud's theoretical ideas about the unconscious are dynamically adapting and adapting to cultural change, as is embodied in the statement.

Within the context of the merging of tradition and modernity, the crochet Qiang horn flower pattern of Qiang embroideries achieved a transformation from purely handmade tradition to modern design, introducing modern design elements such as abstraction, geometry and simplicity. This transformation is in keeping with Freud's theory of repression and

sublimation, according to which primitive impulses or unconscious desires are legitimised and sublimated through artistic creation under cultural pressure.

The Qiang people have confidently preserved and innovated the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern to maintain their traditional culture while satisfying modern aesthetic demands, amidst the cultural influence of Qiang embroidery. The Qiang horn flower pattern not only embodies Freud's theory of psychological defence mechanisms at the cultural level, but also demonstrates the Qiang people's strong psychological defence mechanism, which has enabled the survival and continuity of Qiang culture in the midst of change.

### 3.4 Inheritance of the Collective Unconscious

Unconscious mental activity plays a crucial role in cultural inheritance, according to Freud's theory. The crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery is not only a visual artistic expression, but also symbolizes the collective unconscious of the Qiang people. It is an embodiment of the deeprooted emotions and concepts of the Qiang people, such as their reverence for nature, their longing for love and marriage, and their strong desire for the reproduction and continuity of the community. The Oiang minority groups in China have deeply embedded this symbolic content in their collective memory through embroidery skills and family education passed down from generation to generation.

Freud proposed that the collective unconscious is formed through heredity and early processes of socialisation, and that it contains the cultural accumulation of the history of humanity. China's Qiang minority have passed down their crochet Oiang horn flower pattern designs as part of their cultural heritage. Through inheritance matrilineal and community interaction, the Qiang horn flower pattern has become a symbol of cultural identity for the Qiang minority in China, reflecting the Qiang people's respect for their ancestors' wisdom and traditional beliefs.

Despite the influence of modern culture, the Qiang people continue to preserve and promote the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery, which serves as a manifestation of their psychological defence mechanism. By preserving and passing on the



crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern, it has not only resisted the erosion of local culture by foreign influences, but also revived traditional symbols by combining the Qiang horn flower pattern with modern aesthetics and market demands. The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery, whether in traditional pick embroidery or modern design, represents the Qiang people's desire for a better life, happiness and well-being. Through their artistic creation and daily use, Qiang horn flower pattern have become deeply rooted in their collective unconscious, emphasising that unconscious emotions and desires play an important role in artistic creation. The crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern is not only used in traditional costumes and everyday items, but is also increasingly incorporated into modern cultural and creative products, art design and other fields, a clear manifestation of the collective unconscious of the Qiang people. The Oiang horn flower pattern is deeply rooted in the collective unconscious of the Qiang people, both through its artistic creation and its everyday use, underlining the crucial role that unconscious emotions and desires play in artistic creation.

### 3.5 Symbolic Expression and Fulfilment of Desire

Symbolism is a powerful tool for expressing unconscious mental activity, often used by individuals or collectives to implicitly convey inner feelings and desires. Crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern, both natural objects and symbolic expressions of the Qiang people's collective unconscious, are found in the embroidery of the Qiang minority in China. The Qiang horn flower pattern is an auspicious symbol among the Qiang people, representing harmony, prosperity, love, marriage and family, as well as the Qiang people's desire for a better life and admiration for the reproduction of life.

According to Freud's "The Interpretation of Dreams", dreams are a form of wish-fulfilment, and this mechanism of wish-fulfilment can also be found in artistic creations and cultural symbols [9]. The Qiang women express their visions of love, family harmony and procreation through crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern embroidery, and they achieve emotional release and indirect gratification by continuing to create and appreciate their works.

Reflecting the Chinese Qiang people's deep desire for cultural inheritance and continued vitality, the Qiang horn flower pattern embodies the auspicious meaning and praise of life.

The embroidered Qiang horn flower pattern represents a collective psychological defence and emotional significance, but it is important to recognise that this is subjective. The Qiang horn flower pattern is a powerful tool for the Qiang people to resist the uncertainties and cultural shocks of real life. It reinforces their identification with their own culture and identity through artistic creation and symbolic practice in everyday life. The Qiang people have successfully preserved their culture amidst contemporary cultural influences, as evidenced by the inheritance and evolution of the Qiang horn flower pattern. This is due to the dual effects of wish fulfilment and psychological defence at the unconscious level, which have contributed to the stability and longevity of their culture.

### 3.6 Psychological Defences and Acculturation

Psychological defence mechanisms are strategies that individuals develop to reduce anxiety and protect themselves in the face of internal conflict or external pressure. The Qiang horn flower pattern has significant cultural significance for the Qiang minority in China, serving as a symbol that plays an important role in the collective psychological defence of the Oiang people. The Oiang people have inherited and innovated the crocheted flower pattern, expressing their unconscious desires and emotions, such as reverence for nature, hope for love and marriage, and appreciation of life and reproduction, through artistic form. It is a psychological defence that protects and strengthens national identity, as well as a defence against potential threats to traditional cultural values from modern lifestyles.

The Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese Qiang embroidery is continuously updated with the latest design elements and aesthetic changes to adapt to new market demands, while retaining its original cultural connotations. This sublimation mechanism ensures the pattern's relevance in modern society. Through its use in modern cultural and creative products, fashion design, interior



decoration and other fields, Qiang horn flower pattern retains its symbolic meaning while enhancing the modern value and international influence of Qiang culture.

Freud's theory was that the collective unconscious is the result of experiences and memories that are passed down from generation to generation, and that it has a significant impact on both individual and group behaviour. The crocheted flower patternQiang horn flower pattern is a common element in the embroidery of China's minority and holds great cultural value for the Qiang people, passed down from generation to generation. By inheriting and innovating the Qiang horn flower pattern, the Qiang have not only maintained the stability and continuity of their collective unconscious, but have also promoted cultural adaptation and evolution, allowing the ancient cultural symbol to continue its role as a psychological stabiliser and cultural cohesive force in the new era.

#### 3.7 Life Instincts and Cultural Regeneration

According to Freud's theory, the life instinct (Eros) refers to the innate drive of human beings to pursue the continuation of life, individual growth and social bonding. The following aspects describe the peculiarities of the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese Qiang minority embroidery in terms of life instinct and cultural regeneration:

The crocheted flower motif is said to symbolise fertility and reproduction [10], in line with Freud's concept of the life instinct, which motivates individuals to survive, reproduce and maintain harmony in their relationships. The Qiang horn flower pattern symbolises the Qiang people's admiration for the exuberant vitality of natural things, as well as their expectation of the continuation of the family line, social stability and harmony.

The crocheted flower pattern is a fundamental aspect of the embroidery of the Chinese Qiang minority, which has survived for thousands of years, and its inheritance and innovation at different stages of history demonstrates the power of cultural regeneration. The Qiang people have always expressed their love of life, wishing good luck and identifying with their culture through crocheted floral embroidery [11]. The art of embroidery is constantly evolving and expanding, representing cultural innovation and inheritance driven by the life

instinct of the collective unconscious, especially the crocheted Qiang horn flower pattern, which maintains a strong vitality and cultural infectiousness.

In the face of modern cultural influences, the Qiang people persist in preserving and innovating the crocheted flower pattern of Qiang minority embroidery in China, helping to preserve their cultural roots while adapting to changing times, achieving the dual function of cultural regeneration and psychological defence. The use of the ram's horn flower pattern in contemporary Qiang embroidery and art design demonstrates its cultural revival as a symbol of the life instinct, and represents the self-protection and self-renewal of China's Qiang minority culture in the modern world.

#### 4. Conclusions

According to Freud's theory, the Qiang horn flower pattern in Chinese embroidery has symbolic significance and cultural continuity. The embroidery pattern of the Qiang horn flower pattern not only reflects the Qiang people's innate pursuit of life, reproduction, love and the power of nature, but is also closely related to Freud's concept of the life instinct, fully demonstrating the culture's deep respect and affirmation of the value of life. The transmission and innovation of the ramshorn blossom motifs of the Qiang embroideries show that cultural practices need to adapt and transform to resist the influence of modern culture without losing their essence. In the culture of the Chinese Qiang minority, the Qiang horn flower pattern demonstrated a powerful capacity for cultural regeneration in the process of symbolic transmission and reconstruction through the collective unconscious, ensuring that their culture continued to survive and renew itself in an ever-changing society.

In conclusion, the crocheted flower embroidery pattern in Chinese Qiang minority embroidery reveals the psychological dynamics and social functions in the Qiang cultural tradition, confirms its core position and lasting influence in the continuation of Qiang culture, and provides theoretical support and practical inspiration for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

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