

Research on the Protection and Revitalization of Traditional Fujian Rattan Weaving Utensils from the Perspective of Folk Culture

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Abstract: Traditional folk utensils carry the profound folk customs and regional cultural characteristics of an area or even a nation, representing a materialized heritage formed through the long-term living and laboring of the people. In recent years, with the revival of traditional culture in China and the rise of folk activities in various regions, these traditional folk utensils have once again been presented with new opportunities for development. As traditional tools for living and production in the Minnan region of Fujian Province, China, rattan weaving utensils are revered for their populist, artistic, and practical qualities. This paper will take the "Minnan rattan weaving utensils" as the research subject, combining regional ecological conditions, the process of rattan weaving, and characteristic rattan products, to conduct in-depth research and analysis on the material selection, functional design, and structural layout of the utensils, in order to explore the underlying design concepts. At the same time, using research methods such as functional analysis and field investigation, a detailed study and analysis of the "transformation and activation mechanisms" of "Minnan rattan weaving utensils" in the context of the new era will be conducted. Through this series of work, the aim is to reveal the development trajectory and innovative path of Minnan rattan weaving utensils in modern society.

Keywords: Southern Fujian Region; Folk Utensils; Rattan Weaving Utensils; Folk Culture; Protection and Activation Research

1. Interaction between the Geographical Environment of the Minnan Region and

Rattan Weaving Utensils

The "Minnan region" primarily encompasses the cultural core areas of Quanzhou, Xiamen, Zhangzhou cities in Fujian Province, China, as well as the surrounding culturally influenced regions. The ancestors of this area have long lived with the sea and relied on it for sustenance, a lifestyle that gradually gave rise to a distinctive Minnan marine folk culture and shaped traditional folk utensils with rich regional characteristics. Among these utensils, "rattan weaving" has been widely used in the daily life and production of the local people due to its durability and practicality. However, with the progress of society and the wave of industrialization, these once ubiquitous rattan weaving utensils in Minnan have gradually been replaced by emerging industrial products, leading to the decline and gradual oblivion of the traditional Minnan rattan weaving craft. In light of this, this paper aims to conduct in-depth research and analysis on the Minnan rattan weaving utensils by exploring the ecological environment, weaving techniques, functional design, and other aspects of the Minnan region. Furthermore, the paper will meticulously investigate the transformation and activation mechanisms of "Minnan rattan weaving utensils" against the backdrop of the new era, in the hope of providing references for the protection and innovation of this traditional craft.

Owing to the lengthy coastline and a terrain dominated by mountains and hills in the Minnan region, the ancestors there developed a lifestyle centered on "marine fishing, agriculture, and hunting." This unique lifestyle gave birth to a variety of folk utensils in the Minnan region, each with its own regional characteristics that reflect the traditional cultural essence of the area [1]. The

mountainous and hilly landscape not only provided the Minnan ancestors with abundant natural resources but also served as a natural repository for the materials needed to make essential goods. Rattan weaving utensils, for instance, are crafted from local-specific natural materials such as vines, grasses, and bamboo, as shown in Table 1. This showcases the exceptional craftsmanship and the concept of sustainable development in the creation of Minnan rattan weaving utensils.

Table 1. Materials, Characteristics, and Scope of Application of Vine Weaving Tools in the Minnan Region

Material name	characteristics	applicable scope
Ge Teng	Short growth cycle for annual plants, rough and resilient	Mainly used for preparing tools such as mats and fences
Liuteng	Short growth cycle, smooth surface, light and soft texture	Mainly used for making baskets, dustpans, handles and other utensils
Sorghum stalks	Short growth cycle for annual crops, smooth surface, weak toughness, easy to break	Mainly used for making steaming covers, brooms and other utensils
Bamboo shoots	Short growth cycle, smooth surface, strong toughness	Mainly used for making brooms and other utensils

The information presented in Table 1 indicates that the ancestors of the Minnan region had a profound understanding of the characteristics of local plants and were able to make full use of these resources. They would use materials found locally, applying them according to their properties. Common materials for making rattan weaving utensils include: kudzu vine, willow vine, sorghum stalks, and bamboo twigs. Among them, kudzu vine and willow vine are widely used for weaving various tools due to their toughness and rapid growth capabilities. Sorghum stalks are mainly used for making cooking utensils such as steaming and boiling equipment. From the perspective of Minnan culture, the natural environment not only provides the raw materials for the locals to make tools but is also influenced by humans and their utensils [2]. There has always been a two-way interactive relationship between nature and humans, with both sides influencing

and adapting to each other over a long period. In this process, the natural environment provides the raw materials needed for toolmaking, while humans use these tools to transform the natural environment, making it more suitable for human habitation and thus creating a more livable ecological environment for humans [3].

2. Analysis of the Characteristics of Traditional Minnan Rattan Weaving Utensils

Originating from the ancestors' perfect integration of practicality and artistry in daily life and production, Minnan rattan weaving utensils serve as a significant carrier of the region's folk culture. These utensils, known for their convenience and sturdy structure, exemplify the wisdom of Minnan people's way of life. They are not only daily necessities but also outstanding representatives of weaving art, imbued with the profound spiritual connotations of Minnan folk culture. Research findings indicate that the remaining traditional Minnan rattan weaving utensils can be primarily categorized into daily life and production. However, under the impact of modern industrial products, most of the rattan weaving utensils for daily use have become difficult to find. Occasionally, daily utensils such as "baskets" and "brooms" can still be seen in households, while production tools like "crook baskets," "winnowing baskets," and "fish baskets" are also being replaced by an increasing number of modern products with the development of contemporary agriculture and fisheries.

2.1 The Practicality of Traditional Minnan Rattan Weaving Utensils

The most fundamental function of rattan weaving utensils is to meet the daily needs of people in their living and production activities, and their creation is closely related to family and communal human life [4]. In the Minnan region, the traditional modes of production, primarily agriculture and marine fishing, determine the practicality-centric characteristic of rattan weaving utensils. Commonly seen rattan weaving utensils include daily life items such as "baskets," "steaming covers," "brooms," and "rattan floor mats," as well as production tools like "crook baskets" and "winnowing baskets." These utensils are

crafted to meet the needs of daily life and production, offering not only practicality but also rich folkloric characteristics, blending utility with aesthetics, and reflecting the simplicity and diligence of the Minnan ancestors. For instance, the traditional "steaming basket" is an indispensable tool in household cooking, often used for holding and steaming food. Its shape is typically round and is placed on the edge of the pot, supported by the inner wall of the pot during steaming. Research findings reveal that traditional rattan "steaming baskets" are now rare in the Minnan region, with most families preferring to use modern metal "baskets." Although modern metal utensils have gradually replaced them, some families still retain the traditional rattan "steaming baskets." These "steaming baskets" have a diameter of about 30 centimeters and are usually composed of two layers of overlapping rattan nets, primarily made from sorghum stalks and cotton/linen ropes. During the weaving process, sorghum stalks are arranged side by side, with the linen rope skillfully woven through in a "press, pass, and knot" technique to form a layer, then another layer is added on top and connected with the linen rope, usually using a series of interlocking and pressing knots. These sorghum stalk "steaming baskets" are still in use in some families due to their excellent breathability and the non-stick property with food.

2.2 The Scientificity of Traditional Minnan Rattan Weaving Utensils

The design of rattan weaving utensils can closely reflect the positive interactive relationship between the user and the utensil. The ancestors of the Minnan region have always adhered to the natural law of mutual recycling and adaptation between humans and nature, which allows them to make full use of the materials provided by the local natural environment to create utensils, giving full play to the characteristics of the materials [5]. Moreover, the interaction between Minnan rattan weaving utensils and humans is highly rational. For instance, the broom made from bamboo twigs, which is about 150-160 cm in length, involves tying multiple bamboo twigs together in a certain proportion to form a structure that tapers at the top and gradually widens towards the bottom, culminating in a

fan-shaped structure at the tail. This shape is essentially consistent with the "broom" used in northern regions. This design is conducive to conserving the user's physical energy, with a reasonable grip: one hand at the top and the other in the middle. The fan-shaped bamboo twigs at the bottom are used for sweeping, making the broom easier to swing and covering a wider cleaning area. All of these aspects reflect the humanization and scientificity of Minnan rattan weaving utensils. These utensils not only fulfill the basic functions in daily life but also effectively reduce the labor intensity for the users, demonstrating their high level of scientificity.

2.3 The Artistry of Traditional Minnan Rattan Weaving Utensils

The creators of Minnan rattan weaving utensils are local farmers and fishermen. Initially, the design of these utensils was purely to meet the basic needs of life and production. However, as the challenges in daily life and production were addressed, the creators also began to pursue artistic elements in the patterns and styles of rattan weaving, endowing these utensils with a richer connotation of traditional folk culture [6]. This has led to the Minnan rattan weaving utensils increasingly embodying the rhythmic beauty of traditional craftsmanship in terms of shape, lines, and proportions. Take the "shoulder basket" as an example; its weaving techniques are diverse, including piercing, stitching, twisting, tying, weaving, winding, and coiling. The basket is equipped with arch-shaped handles on both sides, made by twisting and binding multiple willow branches together. In use, there are mainly two methods: lifting and carrying. "Lifting" involves holding the handle of the shoulder basket to carry it, while "carrying" involves placing the hand through the arch-shaped handle and gripping the same side of the basket. The shape is simple, usually in the form of an ingot or circular, without any superfluous decoration or complex patterns. It embodies a sense of simplicity in solving life and production problems, offering a visual effect that emphasizes "simplicity above all," achieving a certain level of artistic height.

3. Revitalization and Transformation of Jiaodong Rattan Weaving Utensils

3.1 Revitalization and Inheritance of Rattan Weaving Craftsmanship

Traditional rattan weaving utensils have generally prioritized practicality over aesthetic appeal. However, with the rising standards of society for quality of life, these utensils, in terms of variety, scale, and craftsmanship, have failed to meet the demands of modern living [7,8]. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out targeted revitalization and transformation of traditional rattan weaving utensils. On one hand, these utensils should align with the consumption and aesthetic values of modern consumers, highlighting their aesthetic and cultural values; on the other hand, they should be integrated with folk activities and the development of cultural and tourism industries, inheriting and revitalizing their traditional cultural traits. The traditional Minnan rattan weaving craftsmanship was born against the backdrop of a fusion of diverse cultures related to traditional agriculture and fishing. Its origin, development, forms, and functions are closely linked to the social environment and the ways of life and production of that time. However, as society has evolved, the soil for the development of traditional rattan weaving craftsmanship has vanished. From a folk perspective, some rattan weaving utensils that held special significance and functions in the agricultural era have now lost their former status and meaning, serving more as carriers of traditional folk culture for display purposes. Therefore, the key to the revitalization and inheritance of traditional rattan weaving craftsmanship lies in its adaptation to social development and the cultural ecosystem, with the aim of creating a socially cultural ecosystem with innovative value, forming a virtuous cycle of cultural ecosystem chains, and thereby promoting the inheritance and cultural continuity of Jiaodong's traditional rattan weaving craftsmanship.

3.2 Deepening the Ecological Environment of Traditional Rattan Weaving Culture

The interaction between nature and human society has always been a cycle of mutual promotion and adaptation [9]. The natural environment provides humans with the necessary resources for production and living, while humans utilize these resources to transform nature, converting the ecological into a humanized ecological landscape. The

humanized ecological landscape is a social ecological chain integrated with nature, society, and the economy. Against this backdrop, traditional rattan weaving utensils and their craftsmanship rely on a specific humanized ecological environment. However, with the development of the social economy and the emergence of industrial substitutes, this ecological environment has been challenged.

Nevertheless, with the proposal of the national strategy for rural revitalization, there has been a renewed focus on traditional handicrafts, offering the Minnan rattan weaving utensils and craftsmanship an opportunity for transformation and upgrade. This is no longer a simple return to the traditional agricultural cultural ecology, but rather a search for balance and innovation within the evolving environment. By examining and reconstructing the Minnan traditional rattan weaving utensils and craftsmanship from the perspective of the humanized ecological landscape, we can endow these utensils with new connotations that appeal to modern youth, build new business formats, and create a vitalized industrial chain. This not only promotes the transformation of rattan weaving craftsmanship but also encourages more young people to naturally use these utensils, thereby learning and inheriting the traditional rattan weaving craft.

3.3 Combining Tradition with Modernity in Rattan Weaving Cultural and Tourism Products

The traditional rattan weaving utensils of the Minnan region, with their sturdy materials and diverse weaving patterns, were once important tools in local daily production and also became a unique artistic form, embodying the essence of local folk culture [10]. The design of these utensils contains elements that modern product design can draw inspiration from. Only by delving into the excavation and research of rattan weaving utensils and their craftsmanship can we ingeniously integrate traditional elements with modern aesthetics in the design of cultural and tourism products. As people's material living standards improve, the design and structure of traditional rattan weaving utensils also need innovation to meet the needs and aesthetics of modern people. During the innovation process, the unique shape and traditional connotations of rattan weaving

utensils should be preserved, while being integrated into contemporary rattan weaving cultural and tourism products that align with modern aesthetics. This will further promote the dissemination of Minnan rattan weaving utensils.

Currently, there has been a shift in thinking regarding the inheritance of traditional handicrafts, the development and sale of cultural and tourism products. Instead of merely pursuing economic development, cultural heritage and protection have become the primary objectives. At the same time, the government is optimizing its role in guiding the folk cultural and tourism market, providing logistical support, and building platforms. It actively organizes, collects, and studies the craftsmanship and creative practices of rattan weaving utensils, striving to create a sustainable folk cultural and tourism market.

4. Conclusion

Traditional folk utensils were once indispensable tools in people's daily lives, serving not only as tools for life and production but also as material carriers of folk customs and folk art. The rattan weaving utensils of the Minnan region are a prime example of such utensils, combining utility with artistry. Their shapes are characterized by smooth, rounded lines, and their craftsmanship is proportionate, with techniques such as piercing, stitching, twisting, tying, weaving, winding, and coiling employed to perfection, satisfying both the needs of life and production and showcasing the beauty of the creation's rhythm. Minnan rattan weaving utensils also adhere to the principles of "utilizing local materials" and "simplicity first," using local natural resources without any superfluous decoration or complex patterns, embodying a sense of practicality in solving real-world problems. These utensils also reflect the industrious, simple, and rational character traits of the local people, showcasing their love for life and respect for the natural environment. However, under the impact of industrialization, Minnan rattan weaving craftsmanship faces unprecedented challenges, with its inheritance and development hindered. In the face of such a situation, it is particularly important to inherit and develop traditional rattan weaving craftsmanship from the perspective of the humanized ecological landscape. This not only

has profound cultural and contemporary value but also allows contemporary young people to understand and recognize traditional craftsmanship more deeply, preserving and passing on the excellent national culture.

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