

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

Comparative Study of Yi Lacquerware Characteristics in Two Regions and Its Application in Modern Art Design

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Comparative Study of Yi Lacquerware Characteristics in Two Regions and Its Application in Modern Art Design

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

……

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, a significant expression of Yi cultural heritage. It focuses on molding techniques, decorative patterns, and color schemes that reflect the creativity and cultural identity of the Yi people. The research compares lacquerware from two important regions: Liangshan Prefecture in Sichuan Province and Dafang County in Guizhou Province. It identifies both the distinct differences and shared features in their artistic styles. These variations are influenced by geographical conditions, ethnic identity, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and the growth of local lacquer industries. The study emphasizes how these elements contribute to the development and transformation of regional artistic styles. It also discusses current challenges, such as maintaining a balance between preserving tradition and encouraging innovation. In addition, it investigates strategies for incorporating Yi lacquerware into contemporary art and design. Using a combination of literature review, field research, interviews, comparative analysis, and case studies, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of the artistic and cultural significance of Yi lacquerware. The findings support the long-term development of traditional crafts and provide valuable insights for applying Yi lacquerware in modern design contexts.

Keywords: Yi lacquerware, Cultural heritage, Regional styles, Artistic characteristics，Modern art design

Kajian Perbandingan Ciri-ciri Perkakas Leker Yi di Dua Wilayah dan Aplikasinya dalam Reka Bentuk Seni Moden

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka ciri-ciri artistik perkakasan lakuer Yi, yang merupakan manifestasi penting warisan budaya masyarakat Yi. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada teknik pembentukan, corak hiasan, dan skema warna yang mencerminkan kreativiti serta identiti budaya masyarakat Yi. Penyelidikan ini membandingkan perkakasan lakuer dari dua kawasan utama, iaitu Wilayah Liangshan di Wilayah Sichuan dan Daerah Dafang di Wilayah Guizhou. Kajian ini mengenal pasti perbezaan yang ketara serta persamaan dalam gaya artistik antara kedua-dua kawasan tersebut. Variasi ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor geografi, identiti etnik, amalan budaya, kepercayaan agama, dan perkembangan industri lakuer tempatan. Kajian ini menekankan bagaimana elemen-elemen ini menyumbang kepada pembangunan dan perubahan gaya seni serantau. Ia juga membincangkan cabaran semasa seperti keperluan untuk mengekalkan tradisi sambil menggalakkan inovasi. Selain itu, kajian ini meneliti strategi untuk mengintegrasikan perkakasan lakuer Yi ke dalam seni dan reka bentuk kontemporari. Melalui gabungan kaedah seperti kajian literatur, penyelidikan lapangan, temu bual, analisis perbandingan, dan kajian kes, kajian ini memberikan pemahaman yang menyeluruh tentang kepentingan artistik dan budaya peralatan lakuer Yi. Dapatan kajian ini menyokong pembangunan mampan kraf tradisional dan menawarkan pandangan berguna untuk aplikasi dalam konteks reka bentuk moden.

Kata kunci: *Perkakasan lakuer Yi, Warisan budaya, Gaya serantau, Ciri artistik, Reka bentuk seni moden*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Research Background

This chapter will introduce the background of the research, the problem statement, the research questions, the research objectives, the significance of the research, and the expected research results, and finally give a framework for writing the whole text.

Lacquerware refers to everyday objects, handicrafts, and works of art made by coating the surface of various utensils with lacquer. Lacquerware is a craft art. Due to China's unique geographical characteristics, which are favorable to the growth of lacquer trees and the availability of very high-quality raw materials of lacquer, the earliest lacquer art was born in China, which has a history of more than 7,000 years. The process of making lacquerware is a very long one, involving more than 40 processes such as lacquer collection, modulation, carcass making, cloth pasting, ash scraping, lacquering, painting, carving, and light pushing, which may take months or even years. The finished product is not only beautiful but also resistant to corrosion, water, and heat (Qiao, 2004).

The Yi ethnic group is the sixth largest ethnic minority group in China, with a population of more than 8 million, mainly in the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi. The Yi region is located in a mountainous area on the southeastern edge of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with high mountains, long rivers, and deep valleys. There are abundant resources of lacquer trees here, which is one of the reasons why Yi lacquerware has such a long life. However, it is due to the vast area and complexity of the Yi tribes, coupled with factors such as social changes and their

development, that there are significant differences in language, dress, customs, aesthetics, and other outward expressions among different Yi tribes, which is also the social background for the eventual differentiated development of Yi lacquerware in different regions.



Figure 1.1: The Distribution of Yi Nationality in China
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Yi lacquerware demonstrates the value of understanding the history of the Yi people in terms of physical form and living heritage and is also a very representative lacquerware among the craftsmanship of China's ethnic minorities. The origin of Yi lacquerware is related to the living habits of the ancient nomadic people and has a long history, which is said to have been created 1700 years ago. With the continuous development of society, Yi lacquerware, as a traditional craft, not only meets the practical needs of people's daily life and social rituals but also plays an important role in rituals and sacrificial ceremonies at the level of religious beliefs, penetrating all aspects of life rituals

and religious beliefs. It becomes a cultural symbol with rich cultural connotations and a wide range of applications, forming a complex and close connection with various elements in the cultural system (Chen, 2014).

Lacquerware is made from natural lacquer liquid, which is mixed with cinnabar, stone yellow, and potash to produce the colours red, yellow, and black, which are also the unique symbolic colours of the Yi people. The bodies of lacquerware are mainly wood, bamboo, leather, and animal bones. The techniques are mainly painted and pile lacquer and their decorative patterns come from a wide range of sources, including natural geography, life and production, plants and animals, and beliefs. In terms of use, it can be divided into production, living, military, and religious utensils (Zhang et al., 2005). It reflects the creative ability and value formation process of the Yi people in an important way and is a typical representative of the Yi culture.

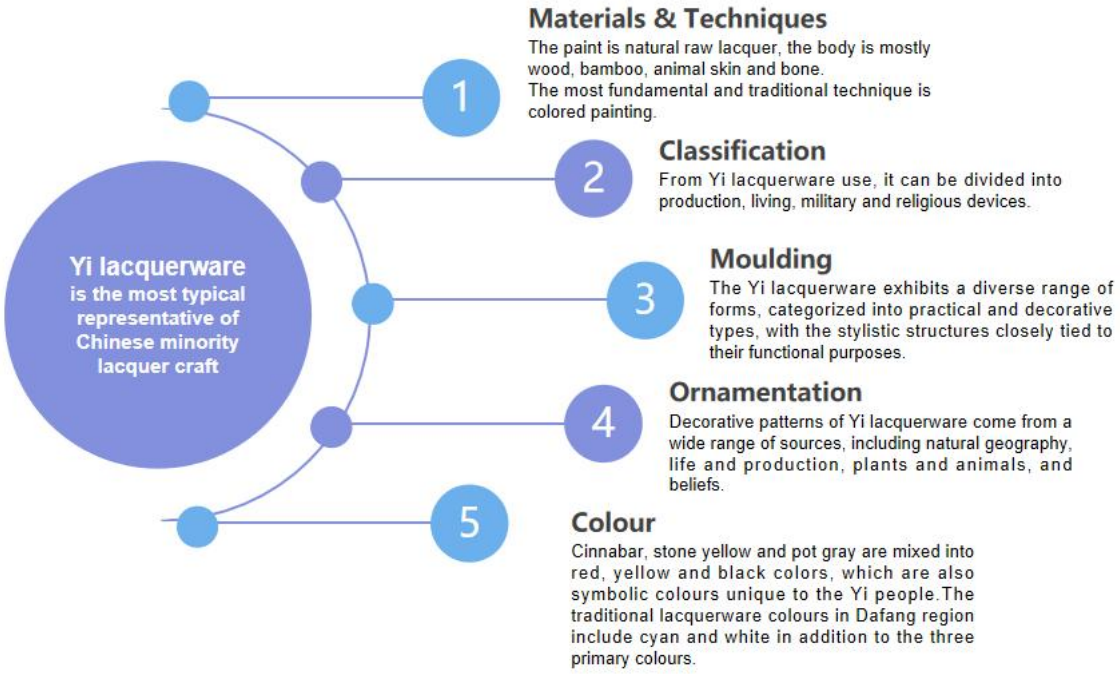


Figure 1.2: The Introduction of Yi Lacquerware
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The development of modern human society depends on continuous innovation, which mainly comes from the inheritance of cultural diversity and plays an important role in new fields of cultural, artistic, and scientific innovation. Any social group is an integral part of cultural pluralism, and the cultural identity of its national group is the fundamental core of its national cohesion. China's national cultural policy has provided a favourable soft environment for the protection and promotion of the outstanding traditional cultures of ethnic minorities and has stimulated people's awareness of preservation and inheritance. Under the impact of modern scientific and technological information, Yi lacquerware and other handicrafts created by traditional farming societies and ethnic minorities are faced with similar problems-protection, inheritance, continuity, innovation, and development. Wang et al (2023) pointed out that the main source of the major challenges faced by Yi lacquerware in the development of society is the failure to effectively balance "inheritance"

and "innovation", as well as "tradition" and "development", in the face of the conflict between the transformation of contemporary social lifestyles and millennia-old traditional value patterns. between "tradition" and "modernity".

Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province is the largest Yi settlement in Sichuan, where Yi lacquerware has the most primitive and traditional artistic characteristics, and is so recognisable that it is often regarded by outsiders as the only form of Yi lacquerware. Under the strong support of national policies and local governments, the Yi lacquerware industry in Liangshan, Sichuan Province has made great achievements as a typical representative of transforming national culture into local economic resources, and the industry has been expanded on a large scale. Due to the market demand and their long-term development considerations, local lacquer practitioners are also considering innovative applications. However, while innovating, they are also facing new dilemmas, as the contradiction between the innovative approach and the maintenance of the original appearance of Yi lacquerware artistic features seems to become prominent. In an era of rapid development, traditional ethnic handicrafts will lose their vitality and gradually disappear without the support of innovation, but innovation just for the sake of innovation will make it difficult for traditional ethnic handicrafts to maintain their characteristics (Zhang, 2015).



Figure 1.3: Liangshan, Sichuan Yi Lacquerware
Source: http://www.yizuren.com/

Dafang County, Bijie City, Guizhou Province, is a relatively concentrated settlement of the Yi ethnic group in Guizhou and a production base for Yi lacquerware. The Yi lacquerware in this region has a pluralistic expression of ethnic integration in the presentation of artistic characteristics, so it presents obvious visual differences from the Liangshan region and is often overlooked by outsiders for its Yi lacquerware heritage identity. The local Yi lacquerware industry reached its peak in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the leather lacquerware was even famous in the whole country (Qiao, 2004). However, under the impact of the modern market economy, the development of the industry as a whole has stagnated and the prospects are bleak. The reason why the inheritance and development of Dafang lacquerware is in a difficult situation is that the old model of lacquerware has been detached from the modern social lifestyle of the general public, and the only way to promote its benign development is to innovate and transform it to meet the needs of the times (Du et al., 2020).



Figure 1.4: Dafang, Guizhou Yi Lacquerware
Source: http:// www.china.org.cn/

The study of a nation's arts and crafts is of great practical significance to the overall development of the nation. From the perspective of inheriting and promoting national culture, the culture created by people in their daily lives, whether it is material culture or spiritual culture, is a concentrated reflection of a nation's collective concept. Lacquerware, as a cultural product, has a long history, and the production of lacquerware in different historical periods has united the joint efforts of a group of people, is the crystallisation of collective wisdom, and is a true reflection of the spiritual and cultural outlook of different people (Yin, 2021). Nowadays, research on ethnic arts and crafts not only protects the cultural and artistic deposits of different ethnic groups but also plays an important role in enhancing ethnic cultural identity and preserving ethnic vitality. Therefore, a comparative study of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, which explores and presents the unique aesthetic style and craft tradition of this ethnic group, can not only further enhance people's understanding of the excellent skills and culture of Yi lacquerware, to promote its inheritance and development, but also at the same time, provide useful academic support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of the Yi national culture, and play a positive role in the preservation of the

cultural identity and vitality of the Yi ethnic group. Promote the role of cultural identity and vitality of the Yi ethnic group.

Existing research on Yi lacquerware has mostly focused on regional craft history and material culture, with scholars like Zhang (2015) noting the artistic and functional roles lacquerware plays in both religious and daily life. However, there is still a gap in comprehensive studies that examine the distinct artistic characteristics across different Yi settlements, especially in terms of modern design applications. This research intends to fill this gap by exploring how the traditional forms and methods of Yi lacquerware can be adapted for contemporary design needs while maintaining their cultural integrity and symbolic value.

This study will focus on the artistic characteristics and symbolic differences of Yi lacquerware from two regions: Liangshan in Sichuan Province and Dafang in Guizhou Province. It will explore the differences in the moulding, ornamentation, and colour schemes of the lacquerware from these two regions, with a particular focus on how these differences are influenced by their unique geographical, cultural, and historical contexts. Yi lacquerware from Liangshan is renowned for its more unified and traditional visual features, with strong natural themes such as animal, plant, and cosmic motifs. Its signature colour palette consists of red, yellow, and black, which not only represents the Yi people's traditional aesthetic but is also closely linked to their ritual practices and religious beliefs. This pronounced regional and cultural symbolism gives Liangshan lacquerware its profound cultural depth and artistic value. In contrast, Yi lacquerware from Dafang presents more diverse artistic characteristics, influenced by cultural exchanges with multiple ethnic groups. The lacquerware in Dafang not only incorporates traditional Yi

elements but also absorbs artistic styles from external cultures, forming a "hybrid" visual language that is unique to the region. The colour schemes and motifs in Dafang lacquerware vary considerably, incorporating traditional Yi symbols alongside elements from other ethnic cultures, giving it a distinctive exotic flair. This artistic diversity reflects the long-standing interactions and integration between the Yi people of Dafang and other ethnic groups. By comparing the artistic characteristics of lacquerware from these two regions, this study aims to uncover the underlying cultural causes of their differences, offering a fresh perspective on the regional artistic development of Yi lacquerware. At the same time, this comparison will contribute to exploring how these traditional elements can be innovatively transformed through modern art design, ensuring their preservation and continued relevance in contemporary society.

In this study, a qualitative research framework will be used as the research framework. With the theoretical guidance of Iconography, Order Sense Analysis, Formal Analysis and Design-Driven Innovation, we will use a variety of specific research methods such as documentary research, fieldwork, interviews, comparative studies, and case studies. Taking the typical representatives of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan and Dafang, Guizhou as the research objects, we will explore the differences in their visual forms and the reasons for the differences, as well as the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design, to inspire the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware and similar minority handicrafts. Through this comparative analysis, the research will highlight the unique aesthetic contributions of both Liangshan and Dafang regions to the broader Yi lacquerware tradition, offering valuable insights for both preservation and innovation within the field of ethnic crafts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Minority handicrafts have become an important symbol of national identity, cultural diversity, and cultural awareness. Yi lacquerware is a typical art form of the Yi ethnic group, which has become a major symbol of Yi cultural heritage by giving unique artistic characteristics through shape, decoration, and colour. However, with the changes of the times, the traditional nature of Yi lacquerware has been gradually weakened and forgotten in the process of continuous inheritance and promotion of technology and design (Zeng, 2017). Especially due to factors such as environment, ethnic group, culture, religion, custom, and aesthetics, the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in different regions have different manifestations. Distinguishing the commonalities and differences between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware is crucial for accurately understanding Yi art. Without this clarity, the protection of Yi art and its cultural diversity may be hindered, and challenges to the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware may arise. A detailed comparative study of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from different regions and clans helps clarify their commonalities and differences, offering a comprehensive perspective for a deeper understanding of the diversity within Yi lacquerware. In addition, Yi lacquerware has been profoundly influenced by the culture, art, economy, and technology of modern society (Luo & Jing, 2020), and its artistic characteristics are more diverse than traditional forms. Distinguishing regions, styles, and types is essential to understanding the relationship between different Yi clans and the development of their lacquerware, thus facilitating the multi-directional inheritance and development of this art. At the same time, for different regions of the Yi ethnic group, the construction of different styles of lacquerware system, not a generalisation, can enable each region to create unique

crafts, maintain a unique national culture and contribute to the economic development of the region.

The geographical environment of the Yi region is vast and varied, and there are great differences between the two typical representative regions in terms of geography, cultural system, living customs, and aesthetic characteristics. The origin and evolution of Yi lacquerware are closely linked to these aspects, and it is due to these diversities that Yi lacquerware presents a variety of differentiated expressions. Without this study, it is impossible to understand why the production and use of Yi lacquerware has completely disappeared in some clades (Yunnan region), why it has been sustained for a long time in some clades (Liangshan region, Sichuan), and why there have been greater renditions and variations in some clades (Dafang region, Guizhou). Only by discussing the reasons can we clarify how the main visual characteristics of Yi lacquerware are presented and how its inheritance pattern continues, laying a theoretical foundation for the conservation and sustainable development of Yi lacquerware.

In modern society, minority handicrafts themselves are vulnerable to impact and weakening until they disappear. The development mode of Yi lacquerware varies from region to region, resulting in an uneven state of inheritance and development. If Yi lacquerware fails to adapt to contemporary needs and gradually disappears, it may result in a disruption to Yi cultural continuity and the erosion of cultural identity, alongside the broader loss of Chinese lacquer art and heritage. To cope with this challenge, one of the paths to promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society is how to apply the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware innovatively through modern art design methods. Providing innovative design strategies that enable Yi

lacquerware to take on a new life in the modern design field, while promoting the inheritance and preservation of Yi culture is the ultimate goal of this study.

Based on the above issues, this study aims to broaden people's knowledge of Yi lacquerware through a comparative study to determine the differences in the performance of artistic characteristics and the reasons for these differences between the Liangshan and Dafang regions of China, where living heritage still exists. In addition, this study also explores the methods and strategies of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in the application of modern art design, giving insights into the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in modern society.

1.3 Research Questions

To address the problem statement of this study, the following questions were posed:

i. What are the similarities and differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region of Sichuan and the Dafang region of Guizhou?

ii. What are the reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from these two regions, considering their geographical, cultural, and historical contexts?

iii. How can application strategies based on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from both regions be proposed for modern art design, to promote its inheritance and innovation in contemporary society?

1.4 Aim

The aim of the study is to understand the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan region in Sichuan and the Dafang region in Guizhou, and to explore the reasons behind the formation of these distinct artistic characteristics, as well as its application in modern design.

1.4.1 Objective

The overall objective of this study is to compare the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan region in Sichuan Province, China, and the Dafang region in Guizhou Province, to explore the reasons behind the formation of these distinct artistic characteristics, and to explore the forms of its application in modern art design, to propose relevant design strategies for the promotion of the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in the contemporary society, and to provide inspiration for the study of similar ethnic crafts.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

i. To identify the similarities and differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions.

ii. To examine the reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, considering their geographical, cultural, and historical influences.

iii. To propose modern art design application strategies based on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from both regions, to promote its inheritance and innovation in contemporary society.

1.5 Research Significance

At present, there exists a research tendency in the related academic field that Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan is often used to refer to the lacquerware of all Yi regions, which is a loss of objectivity and accuracy in academics. At the same time, Yi lacquerware also faces the double impact of modern technology and cultural background. As an important part of Chinese Yi culture, Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware has a rich history and unique artistic value. A comparative study of their visual characteristics can provide insights into their production techniques, decorative styles, and use of colours. This study will systematically collate the artistic characteristics of lacquerware from different Yi regions and record in detail the development of Yi lacquerware in different regions. The analysis of the differences in cultural connotations and aesthetic values of Yi lacquerware is of great significance for the protection of ethnic and cultural diversity, thus helping to preserve and pass on this valuable cultural heritage. In this way, the cultural and artistic forms of different regions and clans of the Yi ethnic will not be erased and the inheritance will not be interrupted, thus effectively preserving the national characteristics and enhancing the dissemination of the national culture. This study helps to reveal the similarities and uniqueness of Yi lacquerware from different regions in terms of moulding, ornamentation, and colour, which is a theoretical prerequisite for the effective development of Yi lacquerware and forms an effective supplement to the theory of Chinese lacquerware history. Through comparative analysis, we can have a more comprehensive understanding

of the diversified manifestations of Yi lacquerware art, and provide a strong academic basis for the creation and promotion of Yi lacquerware through modern art design, as well as the realisation of its inheritance and innovation.

At the same time, Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware, as an art form with regional characteristics, demonstrates the cultural differences and connections between different regions and ethnic groups, deepens people's understanding of and respect for multiculturalism, and provides useful references for the dissemination of national culture.

Yi lacquerware is famous for its exquisite decorations and unique visual effects, which have significant inspiration and influence on the field of lacquerware art and design. Gaining a deeper understanding of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from different regions and further exploring the application strategies of Yi lacquerware in modern art design, helps to explore new ways of artistic expression and give modern connotations to traditional culture. This study can provide suggestions for practitioners and designers related to Yi lacquerware and promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in modern society.

For the Yi people, Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware are their unique cultural symbols and sources of pride. Through the comparative study of the artistic characteristics of the two, it can deepen the Yi people's recognition and understanding of their cultural traditions, and maintain and pass on the diversity of ethnic cultures.

In conclusion, the importance of the comparative study on the artistic characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware lies in the positive and far-reaching impacts on the preservation and inheritance of cultural heritage, the promotion of cultural exchanges and dissemination, the promotion of innovative and applied research as

well as the strengthening of the national cultural identity, etc., and at the same time, it is expected to provide useful references for the preservation, innovation, and inheritance of culture.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study focuses firstly on comparing the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region of Sichuan and the Dafang region of Guizhou, including the moulding, ornamentation, and colour of Yi lacquerware. To ensure a structured comparison, the selection of regions is based on historical significance, cultural relevance, and distinctiveness in the Yi lacquerware tradition, considering factors such as the prominence of the lacquerware industry in each region and its regional development over time.

Secondly, it examines the deep-rooted reasons for these differences, covering the geographical environment, ethnic group situation, culture and religion, customary aesthetics, and other factors related to the lacquerware industry in the two regions. This analysis is further refined by focusing on the specific socio-historical contexts and how these shaped the unique features of Yi lacquerware in each region. Specific cases of traditional and modern lacquerware production are studied to provide a detailed understanding of the complexities involved.

Finally, based on the results and findings of the previous comparative study, further analyses are conducted to analyse the application strategies of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design. The scope of this analysis includes an exploration of how these artistic characteristics can be effectively integrated into

contemporary design practices, with criteria for selecting case studies that reflect diverse applications of Yi lacquerware in modern design.

This study aims to provide effective theoretical suggestions for researchers, lacquer art practitioners, and designers in related fields. The implementation of the scope will follow a methodological framework, incorporating both qualitative and comparative research techniques, including fieldwork, interviews, and case studies of lacquerware designs from the two regions.

1.7 Expected Research Outcoms

This study is expected to provide theoretical supplements to the related research in the fields of Yi lacquerware and Chinese lacquerware, to make up for the shortcomings of the existing research and to promote the development of the discipline. At the same time, through the in-depth excavation of Yi culture and art, it is expected to promote its inheritance and provide a positive contribution to the protection and development of ethnic culture. In addition, this study will provide useful insights for the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society by exploring its application in modern art design.

1.8 Dissertation Structure

This dissertation consists of five chapters, which are, in order, Introduction to the Study, Literature Review, Research Methodology, Findings and Discussion, and Conclusion.

Chapter 1 outlines the basics of the study. It includes the background of the study, the problem statement, the research questions, the research objectives, the

significance of the study, the scope of the study, the intended research objectives, and the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature review. Starting from the framework of the study, the theoretical literature related to the study of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics is reviewed in turn. It includes the theoretical framework of the study, the origin and development of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, the types and craftsmanship, the connection between the artistic characteristics and humanities, the comparative analysis of the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions, and lastly, the forms of application of the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in modern art design. This chapter also points out the guiding role of previous research for this study.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology. According to the theme of this study, the research framework is first identified as a qualitative research framework, and then the theoretical frameworks and research strategy are clarified. Based on this, the research methodology is specified by explaining how the data collection and data analysis methods address the research questions.

Chapter 4 is the findings and discussion chapter. It first focuses on comparatively analysing the data collected from the fieldwork, observational study, and interviews to obtain a series of research findings and develop effective application strategies. This is followed by a discussion of the study, including the interpretation of the findings and results generated by the study, the limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

Chapter 5 provides a conclusion of the study. This chapter is a review of the full text, including the research questions, research objectives, research findings and contributions, research shortcomings, and outlook.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the similarities and differences in the performance of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region of Sichuan and the Dafang region of Guizhou, analyses the origin and development of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang, and explores the differences in the artistic characteristics and the reasons for the formation of the differences, as well as the methods and strategies in the application of modern art design.

In this chapter, based on the existing literature, the theoretical framework of the study on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, the origin and development of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, the crafting process, and the specific artistic characteristics manifested, including the moulding, ornamentation and colour, are outlined and discussed. It also explores the mutual influences and effects between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and modern art design. Additionally, the chapter incorporates a review of literature on lacquerware art in East and Southeast Asia to provide a broader comparative context. The method of literature review adopted is mainly based on thematic classification, such as the types of art theories, the historical development of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, the process of craftsmanship, Type of ware, decorative methods, pattern characteristics, the performance of the use of colours, as well as the existing ways and methods of application in modern art design. On this basis, a comprehensive comparative analysis is formed by combining the viewpoints and research results in the existing literature to reveal the similarities and differences between the two and their cases of

application in modern art design. Finally, by reviewing and analyzing existing research literature, viewpoints and opinions are put forward to explore the theoretical significance and potential problems of the comparative study of the artistic characteristics of lacquerware from the Liangshan and Dafang Yi ethnic groups, as well as the direction for future research development and challenges. Through critical analysis of these studies, we will reveal the current gaps in research and clarify the unique contributions of this study.

There are Three main ways of literature collection used in this chapter: the first is academic databases, such as Knowledge.com (CNKI), Google Academic and so on. The second is searching through libraries. The third is literature citation tracking. Through these ways, the theoretical and visual literature of this study is collected comprehensively and the latest literature can be traced. The scope of literature includes the composition of the theoretical framework of visual art, the development and evolution of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, its visual characteristics and causes and its application in modern art design, and other related literature.

"The so-called Yi lacquerware is a folk handicraft developed based on the ancient tableware of the Yi people, and it is a favourite artwork and used item of the Yi people" (Zhang et al., 2014: 397). Handicrafts are the core expression of the Yi culture, fitting with their ethnic traits and closely linked to their labour and life, region and society (Nie, 2016). Yi lacquerware has a long history, and unique and distinctive visual characteristics, and is an example of folk craftsmanship in Southwest China (Zhou, 2016). In this study, the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware mainly include three aspects: moulding, ornamentation and colour.

Geographic conditions have shaped the unique national culture and cultural psychology, The Liangshan region has long been on the southwestern edge of the Han cultural circle, and factors of the geographic environment have blocked the exchanges and communication between the internal Yi ethnic group and other ethnic groups (Peng, 2020). It was not until after the founding of the People's Republic of China that the Liangshan Yi completely said goodbye to the slavery society and the barrier of isolation from Han culture was broken. Before that, Yi lacquerware only served to satisfy the aesthetic expression and practical value of their people. Zhang (2019) pointed out that as a kind of ethnic cultural derivative, minority handicrafts have a unique artistic evolution. Therefore, with the progress of the times and the high-speed development of the social economy, the impact of modern advanced industry, the diversification of market development and the changes in modern aesthetics, the survival space of Yi traditional lacquerware, which lacks innovation in patterns, colours and styles, is getting smaller and smaller, and the development and inheritance of Yi lacquerware are facing an unprecedented crisis (Wang et al., 2016).

2.2 Art Theories for the Study of Artistic Characteristics of Yi Lacquerware

Theoretical studies on visual artworks rely on a structured foundation of art theories as the logical basis of the study. In this study, the theoretical framework of visual art provides theoretical support and methodological guidance for in-depth interpretation and analysis of Yi lacquerware works, as well as for explaining and understanding their visual representations and connotations. In the field of visual art, scholars have proposed a variety of visual art theoretical frameworks, each emphasising different visual factors and aesthetic dimensions.

Formalism theory is a common visual art theoretical framework that provides theoretical support for the study of the stylistic aesthetics of Yi lacquerware. Proposed by Wölfflin (1915), it focuses primarily on the formal elements of artworks, such as lines, shapes, and compositions. By contrasting and classifying these forms, Wölfflin highlights the differences and characteristics between different art periods and styles. Gombrich (1984) further explored psychological studies of decorative arts and form perception, focussing on Order Sense Analysis and formal structure in decorative artworks. His research provided perspectives related to formalism, emphasising the perception of form and orderliness in decorative arts. Arnheim (1954), on the other hand, also emphasised the importance of the formal elements of visual artworks for artistic expression and viewing experience. He believed that there are intrinsic connections and interactions between these visual elements, which together constitute the visual expression and aesthetic effect of the work.

In studying the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, formalism theory provides a useful theoretical framework and methodological guidance. By analysing and comparing the formal elements of Yi lacquerware, such as lines, shapes and compositions, the researcher can reveal the stylistic differences and characteristics of Yi lacquerware from different regions and historical periods. In addition, studying how patterns and colours interact with the overall shape and how they produce visual aesthetics is also a key research direction. Formalism theory emphasises the interrelationships and intrinsic connections between visual elements, so by analysing ornamentation and colour in Yi lacquerware, researchers can gain insights into how these elements interact with the overall shape and produce a sense of beauty in visual perception.

Overall, the theory of formalism provides important academic support and guidance for the study of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware. The researcher can apply this theory to deeply analyse the formal elements of Yi lacquerware, reveal its stylistic features and visual effects, and further explore the artistic expressions and social functions of Yi lacquerware in the cultural context.

On the other hand, the theory of symbolism plays an important role in the study of the cultural significance and symbolic symbols of Yi lacquerware. Panofsky (1955) delved into the symbolic significance and cultural context of artworks in his study, pointing out that the symbols and symbolic meanings in the works of art are an important part of the conveyance of the cultural message. He believed that these symbols represent the cultural, social and psychological connotations embedded in the works. In studying the characteristics of Yi lacquerware, the researcher will examine the relationship between the era of its creation and Yi culture, and explore the extent to which it was influenced by Yi traditions and history. Particular attention will be paid to whether the elements such as ornamentation and colour have symbolic meanings, as well as to the Yi culture and folklore they represent, and to the specific manifestations of the Yi social and historical contexts they reflect. Through such research, the cultural messages conveyed by Yi lacquerware and its special position in Yi society can be deeply interpreted.

To sum up, the visual art theoretical framework is the theoretical basis for interpreting and analysing visual artworks. By emphasising different visual elements and aesthetic dimensions through the use of different visual art theoretical frameworks, researchers are provided with diversified research approaches and perspectives. By linking these two visual art theoretical frameworks with the study of Yi lacquerware artistic

characteristics, the researcher can understand and explain the visual performance and cultural connotation of Yi lacquerware from multiple perspectives according to specific research purposes and objects, and conduct in-depth visual analyses and interpretations by using the corresponding research methodologies, to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware art.

2.3 The Origin and Development of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The art forms of different regions and nationalities often carry the historical, cultural and social background of their peoples. The uniqueness of the craftsmanship and artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware is closely related to the historical, social, aesthetic, economic and cultural values of the locality. Current theories of Yi studies are inconclusive about the exact time of the origin of Liangshan Yi lacquerware (Zhou, 2016). According to He (2000), Yi lacquerware is considered a living fossil in the history of the development of Chinese lacquer culture. This is because Yi lacquerware is similar to Neolithic painted pottery in terms of shape, ornamentation and colour, whereas, the main feature is that it is made of wood. According to the speculation of related historical materials, the history of wood-body lacquerware in China is very long, probably earlier than the development of pottery. From Luo's (1992) study, it is rumoured that the lacquer painting technique of Yi lacquerware began with the invention of Diyi Huofu, which has a history of about 57 generations, at least about 1400 years ago. Specifically in the Liangshan region, Zhang (2002) argues that empirical evidence shows that Yi lacquerware production has a history of more than 400 years. From this, it can be inferred that the actual origin of Yi lacquerware would be much earlier. The conclusions of these three studies are universally representative, and all acknowledge that the origin of

Liangshan Yi lacquerware is relatively ancient. In general, the second viewpoint has a higher probability of being adopted in the study of Yi lacquerware.

The origin and widespread use of Yi lacquerware is the result of the Yi forefathers through natural selection in actual life. This is mainly because the Yi ancestors experienced a long nomadic life, used wooden and leather utensils that were more suitable for this way of life, and continued to improve the shape and craftsmanship of the wares through long-term use, making them lighter and more beautiful. The region where the Yi ancestors lived was rich in raw lacquer and possessed unique natural and mineral dyes, which also became a natural factor in the creation and development of lacquerware. Therefore, the emergence of Yi lacquerware is the result of natural selection produced and inherited under the interaction between people and the natural environment (Zhou, 2016). Even in recent times, due to the geographical closure of the Liangshan Yi region, foreign industrial products are expensive, while locally-made lacquerware is relatively inexpensive compared to the former (Zhang, 2002). Coupled with the fact that there have been no major changes in local folklore and social structure, Yi lacquerware remains a daily utility ware. This is the main reason why Liangshan Yi lacquerware can be stably preserved for a long time as a form of craftsmanship with a living heritage.

In recent years, the development of Liangshan Yi lacquerware has been divided into three periods according to time. The first period is after the founding of the PRC (the People's Republic of China) and before the reform and opening up. According to Zhang (1998), although the social structure of the Liangshan Yi ethnic has undergone a great transformation, the lacquerware handicraft industry is still dominated by individual farmers, with no concept of industrialisation. Production was only to meet basic local needs and the

economic benefits were low. Two state-run lacquerware factories were established with the support of the government, but the lacquerware industry also failed to develop due to geographic closure and solidified concepts. However, there was an important shift in the inheritance of Yi lacquerware during this period. Jiwu Wuqie serves as the only national-level inheritor of the Yi lacquerware painting technique in China, he broke the iron rule that Yi lacquerware has always been passed down from family to family, enabling the technique to be taught openly. This breakthrough played an important role in the subsequent development of Liangshan Yi lacquerware.

The second stage is after the reform and opening up to the beginning of this century. Driven by the reform and opening-up policy, the Liangshan Yi lacquerware industry ushered in a brand new development opportunity (Yan & Yang, 2021). According to Zhang (2017), the 1980s and 1990s were a period of great increase in the production of lacquerware in home workshops in rural areas, where the products were only provided to home users in the surrounding areas, following the traditional craftsmanship and artistic style, although it brought better economic benefits to individual craftsmen. Lacquerware production in towns and cities in this period has established three lacquerware enterprises, two are state-run and collective business nature, respectively, Liangshan National Crafts Company and Zhaojue County Allied National Crafts Co., Ltd. and private nature of the Xide County Forestry Ethnic Crafts Factory. Policy support and market development have made these lacquerware factories remarkable. In the early stage, they mainly produced traditional Yi lacquerware, and developed many new lacquerware types, including large furniture such as tables, chairs and cabinets, because the expansion of the external market led to a breakthrough in lacquerware design. However, to pursue economic benefits unilaterally, chemical lacquer was used to produce a large number of short-cycle, low-cost

and rough tourist crafts, which has begun to lose the origin of traditional Yi lacquerware. This kind of chemical lacquer product still occupies a considerable part of the market share until now, which is unfavourable to the development of Yi lacquerware. In 2001, two enterprises operated by the state and collectives closed down due to rising costs, shrinking market share and lack of competitiveness.

The third stage is from 2008 to the present. 2008 was a turning point when the Liangshan Yi lacquerware painting technique was listed as the second batch of China's national intangible cultural heritage, and the state's support began to increase. At the same time, the Yi lacquer industry in the Liangshan region entered the private sector, but the product mix is still dominated by a high volume of cheap chemical lacquer tourist crafts and a low volume of traditional Yi dining and drinking utensils lacquerware (Zhang, 2017). Now there are close to 60 lacquerware enterprises and factories in the Liangshan region for production and operation, but the scale is not too large, no leading enterprises to play a leading role, lack of products with core competitiveness, and insufficient awareness of product innovation and development (Yang et al., 2023). Ma (2017) argues that this is related to policy support, academic protection, and talent cultivation and that there is an urgent need for reform and innovation from craftsmanship to the design of lacquerware products.

Based on the above research, important background information on the current development and industry composition of Yi lacquerware has been provided. However, these studies also reveal gaps between policy support and actual outcomes, a lack of industry competitiveness, and an urgent need for innovation and design reform. Subsequent research will focus on how to effectively integrate traditional elements with

modern art design to enhance the core competitiveness of products and seek more practical and forward-looking solutions.

Table 2.1: Publicly Announced Items of Traditional Skills (Traditional Handicrafts) in Category VIII of the Second National Intangible Cultural Heritage List

第二批国家非物质文化遗产名录第八类传统技艺（传统手工艺） Publicly Announced Items of Traditional Skills (Traditional Handicrafts) in Category VIII of the Second National Intangible Cultural Heritage List			
序号 Serial Number	编号 Number	项目名称 Project Title	申报地区或单位 Declaring Area or Unit
909 909	Ⅷ-126 Ⅷ-126	金漆镶嵌髹饰技艺 Gold lacquer inlay painting technique	北京市 Beijing
910 910	Ⅷ-127 Ⅷ-127	漆器髹饰技艺(徽州漆器髹饰技艺、重庆漆器髹饰技艺) Lacquerware Painting Techniques (Huizhou Lacquerware Painting Techniques, Chongqing Lacquerware Painting Techniques)	安徽省黄山市屯溪区、重庆市 Tunxi District, Huangshan City, Anhui Province, Chongqing, China
911 911	Ⅷ-128 Ⅷ-128	彝族漆器髹饰技艺 Yi Lacquerware Painting Technique	四川省喜德县、贵州省大方县 Xide County (a representative area of Liangshan Yi lacquerware), Sichuan Province, Dafang County, Guizhou Province

From the above three stages of development, it can be seen that the advantages of the development of Liangshan Yi lacquerware in recent years are reflected in the fact that, firstly, with the support of national policies and local governments, traditional Liangshan Yi lacquerware has been effectively protected and has helped to enhance its artistic status and economic value. Secondly, it is a great breakthrough in the form of craft transmission, which provides a new mode of talent training, which can effectively promote the inheritance and development of lacquerware craft. But the disadvantages are also quite obvious. Firstly, due to the influence of social changes and the accelerated process of social modernisation, the status of Yi lacquerware as the unique utility ware of the nation has significantly declined, and its consumer market has drastically shrunk. Secondly, under

the influence of the market economy, the shortcomings of traditional craftsmanship, such as high cost, complicated craftsmanship, and inability to mass produce, are highlighted, and the economic benefits also make the number of people willing to become practitioners diminish again and again. Thirdly, at present, the development of the Liangshan Yi lacquerware industry needs to seek diversified support and development paths, including its own innovation and development capabilities, market-oriented strategies and mechanisms, support from industry associations and organisations, as well as recognition and support from the society and the market. It cannot rely solely on government resources and guidance, which will limit the diversity and flexibility of its development to a certain extent, making it difficult to adapt to the changing environment and market demand.

2.4 Types and Craftsmanship of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

There are many varieties of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, more than twenty kinds, of which the most important and common ones include five kinds of wine sets, tableware, weapons, horse harnesses, and Bimo (Yi language, similar to sorcerers in the Han society) utensils (Luo, 1992). At present, the types and shapes of Liangshan Yi lacquerware have changed significantly. Among them, weapons stopped most of their production several decades ago, and most of them have now become historical relics. The production of horse harnesses has also decreased. Wine tools and tableware are still in production, but they have undergone some changes. For example, wine sets have mostly changed to the shape of tall glasses or tall beer mugs. The shapes of dining tables are similar to modern ones, except that the patterns and colours still retain the traditional Yi characteristics. In addition, many non-Yi traditional artefacts have been produced, including a variety of modern daily-use and recreational utensils (Zhang, 2002). In addition, in the tourism market, due to

market orientation and demand, Yi lacquerware has also become a major local cultural tourism speciality in Liangshan, with a wide variety of products, and increasing economic benefits. However, the types of Yi lacquerware listed in the above studies are all generalisations and lack detailed categorisation. In particular, there is a lack of analyses of contemporary Yi lacquerware types, which needs to be supplemented by further research.

This evolution reflects the modernisation trend and diversified needs of lacquerware making, which not only meets the functional requirements of contemporary life but also demonstrates innovative design and craftsmanship. At the same time, Yi lacquerware that retains traditional elements still exists, demonstrating the inheritance and continuation of Yi culture as well as the vitality and adaptability of the national culture.

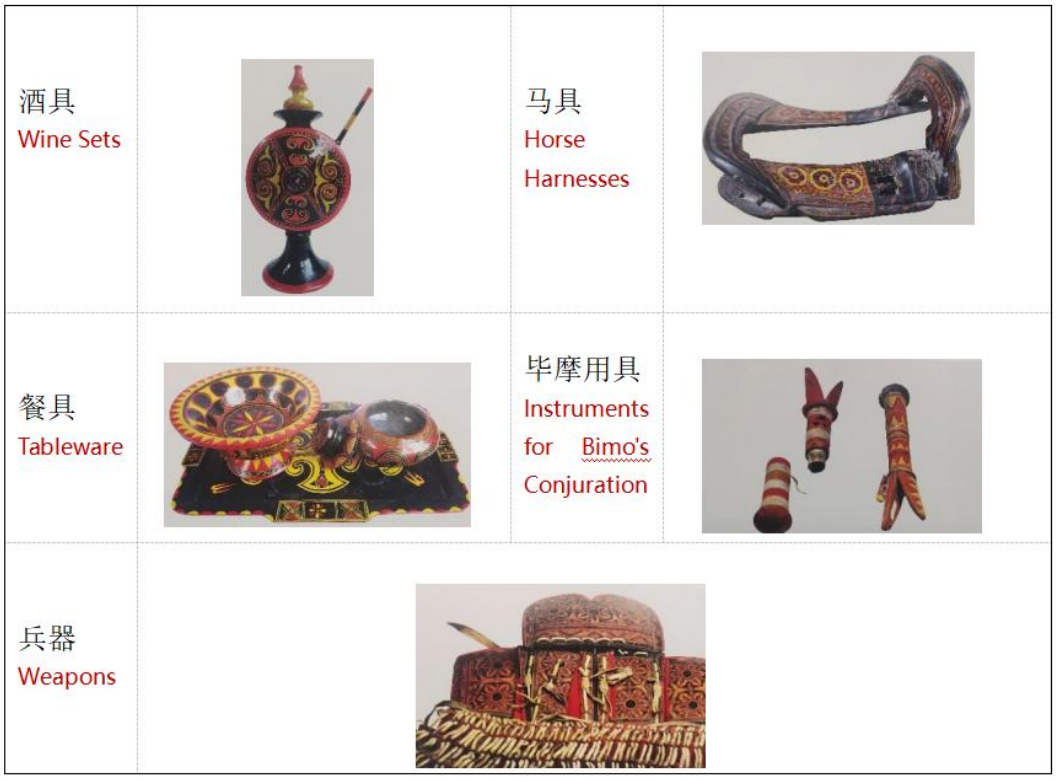


Figure 2.1: Common Types of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware
Source: Liu, H. Z. (2011). On Liangshan Yi Lacquer Culture. Art and Design

The craftsmanship of Yi lacquerware is extremely important, not only as the foundation and guarantee of lacquerware production but also as the key to the expression and continuation of the artistic characteristics of lacquerware. In addition, the inheritance and innovation of craft technology is an important task to protect and promote the development of Yi lacquerware art. The Yi lacquerware craft covers dozens of steps, which can be divided into four main stages, i.e., material selection, production of body, lacquer painting and drying stage (Nie, 2016). Although the above study is a technological analysis of the craftsmanship of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region and provides a relatively comprehensive summary of the process, it does not have a very detailed technological description and analysis.

Table 2.2: Basic Steps in the Craft of Making Yi lacquerware in Liangshan

Steps	Methods	Materials, and Tools
Material selection	Selection of suitable materials for the body and lacquer Making	Wood, bamboo, leather, etc., raw lacquer, and lacquer pigments
Crafting the body	Crafting the body of lacquerware	Creating the body using the method such as spinning wood and molding
Lacquer painting	Painting the base coat, sanding, and drawing patterns (requires multiple repetitions)	Raw lacquer, prepared colored lacquer, goat hair brush, sandpaper, etc.
Drying	Shade-drying placing and drying in a cool place	Shade room

The body materials of Liangshan Yi lacquerware are very diverse, which also depends on the natural environment and cultural and religious habits of Yi ethnic survival. There are four main types of bodies: wood body, leather body, horn and bone body, and bamboo body. Wooden body is the most widely used body, the cost is relatively low, and the daily lacquerware used by common people is mainly based on this kind of body. Due to

the large amount of use also produced a more efficient spinning process. Leather bodies were generally made from cowhide, and were strictly used by the upper class. It was mainly used to make weapons, such as shields, armour, horse harnesses, etc., as well as wine sets and tableware. Horn and bone bodies are rare, mainly used as status symbols and religious utensils, such as eagle claw cups and goat skulls. Bamboo bodies were also mainly used for religious utensils, such as the magic utensils of the Bimo (Zhang et al., 2021).

The lacquer process of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan is simpler and more primitive than in other regions, but it is all handmade (Zhang, 1998). Step 1: Brush primer. Make the carcass flat and smooth, protected by a base lacquer layer. Step 2: Patching thin grey. Treat the cracks and deformations of the carcass with a paste of lacquer grey. Step 3: Sanding. Sanding is carried out after the patching grey dries. Step 4: Patching thick grey. The operation method is the same as step two, only the paint should be slightly thicker. Step 5: sanding again. The operation method is similar to step three, using water sandpaper, and requires the product surface to achieve flat, smooth standards. Step 6: Brush the colour paint. Repeatedly paint the primer and the colour paint several times. Step 7: Brush the top coat. Use cooked paint, raw paint and light oil to mix and formulate the top coat for painting (Peng, 2000). Each step of the process is repeated several times to a dozen times, and the length of the process is also closely related to the season, with humidity and temperature requiring a good match. The above studies provides a relatively detailed description of the Yi lacquerware process in the Liangshan region, but does not analyse the impact of the process on the formation of lacquerware styles.

The most important and commonly used technique for traditional lacquer decoration is lacquer painting. In addition, there are also inlaid and stacked lacquer methods, but they are less used nowadays (Zhang, 1998). The pattern decoration methods of Yi lacquerware include inlay, lacquer stacking, lacquer painting and carving. Inlay refers to the embedding of shells or gold and silver pieces into the black lacquer base to form various patterns and motifs, and is commonly used on items such as arrow quivers, hand guards, hero's belts, and wrist guards. Lacquer stacking refers to the pasting of powder made of metal on lacquerware, which is more decorative and a relatively new production method. Lacquer painting means that black lacquer is applied first, and then coloured lacquer is used to draw patterns and decorations, which is the most common method of painting in lacquerware craftsmanship. Carving refers to the simple carving of motifs on a wooden body after applying lacquer, and then filling in the outlines of the motifs with coloured lacquer, which is commonly used for the decoration of small items such as needle and thread cones and mouth strings (Bing, 2000). To this day, the most striking of the lacquer decorative techniques in the Liangshan region is still colour painting. Usually, a special brush is used to outline precise lines of decoration on the lacquerware or to fill in blank areas with colours, lines and dots to accentuate the decorative design (Zhang, 2002).



Figure 2.2: Liangshan Yi Lacquerware Painting Crafts
Source: http://finance.people.com.cn/

However, due to commercialisation and other reasons, many lacquerware workshops today use chemical lacquer and an assembly mode of production, and the process is only as close as the step of painting the decoration to the traditional lacquerware craft. This destruction of the traditional lacquerware process has brought about several disadvantages. The consequence of this negative innovation is that in terms of cultural inheritance, the process and technology of traditional craftsmanship will not be completely inherited, thus gradually weakening the unique cultural value of Yi lacquerware. In terms of artistic characteristics, the unique artistic characteristics and aesthetic value contained in the traditional lacquerware process will be lost. Because the production process and material characteristics of chemical lacquer are very different from the traditional lacquerware process, the lacquerware loses its original patterns, colours and textures, and is unable to fully display the unique aesthetics of traditional craftsmanship. For environment and health, the use and treatment of chemical lacquer may pollute the environment, posing potential risks to the health of craftsmen and users, and is not in line with the concept of sustainable development. Jiwu Wuqie, the national-level inheritor of

the Yi lacquerware painting technique, has expressed deep concern over the unreasonable changes to the craft, and in fulfilling his inheritance responsibilities, he has continued to call for the encouragement of the use of natural materials and traditional techniques, to ensure the sustainable development of lacquerware craftsmanship and the passing on of cultural values.

2.5 The Connection between the Artistic Characteristics of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware and Local Humanities

The Yi people's reverence for nature reflects their understanding of the relationship between heaven and earth and human beings. This understanding is reflected in the colour and ornamentation of Yi lacquerware. Over the years, there have been very few changes in the mouldings and ornamentation of Yi lacquerware. The subjective reason for this is that the Yi lacquer art inheritance focuses on order and an orderly way of transmission (Zhou, 2016). The inheritance of Yi lacquerware skills in Liangshan is usually passed from father to son, and occasionally to family and friends. In terms of body, moulding, ornamentation and colour, ancient teachings are strictly followed and no arbitrary changes are allowed (He, 2000). The objective reason for this is the isolating influence of natural geographical conditions, and the cultural isolation barrier formed over a long period has enabled the traditional culture of the ethnic groups to be preserved relatively intact (Zhou, 2016).

The artistic characteristics of lacquerware include colour, ornamentation and moulding. However, they do not have the same importance in lacquerware. The first is colour. Lacquerware uses a combination of black, red and yellow colours, which is highly recognisable as national. The second is the ornamentation. The ornamentation on the lacquerware has unique characteristics, which can resonate and identify with the Yi people.

While the types and mouldings of traditional lacquerware are unique, they are not as important as colours and ornamentation in terms of symbolism and ethnic identity. At the same time, colours and decorations have a better ornamental effect, so they can be the most prominent and intuitive symbols of the Liangshan Yi culture (Zhang, 2015). Zhang (2015) elaborates on the significance of the colour and ornamentation in Yi lacquerware. However, this fixed mode of colour and ornamentation often struggles to adapt to modern aesthetics and market demands. Therefore, exploring how to maintain traditional colours and ornamentation while introducing new design concepts and methods to enrich the expressive forms of Yi lacquerware, thereby enhancing its practicality and artistic value in contemporary society to meet the diverse needs of the modern market, becomes crucial.

2.5.1 Moulding

The shape and layout of the decorative patterns of Liangshan Yi lacquerware are closely related to the ware type of Liangshan Yi lacquerware (Xing, 2015). Traditional Yi lacquerware is mainly food and wine sets, and their mouldings are mostly round, oblate and cylindrical. From the top view angle, the lacquerware presents a square round shape, similar to the sun; while from the side view, it presents a crescent shape. This shape originated from the observation of the Yi ancestors on the changes of the sun, moon and stars in nature, which they abstracted and gradually applied to the mouldings of Yi lacquerware, indirectly reflecting the Yi people's worship of the sun and moon (Zhou, 2020).



Figure 2.3: Round Wine Pot
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press

The living objects of the Yi people are deeply influenced by local customs and focus on practicality. For the convenience of migration in their nomadic life, the Yi people sat on the ground when they ate, and hardly ever used a dining table. Most of the tableware in lacquerware is high-footed, with a base of about 20cm, which is very convenient to use on the ground. With the addition of high rims, the tableware could also be effectively insulated (Zhou, 2020).



Figure 2.4: Wooden Pot
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press



Figure 2.5: Wooden Pot
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press



Figure 2.6: Wooden Helmet
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press

The Yi ancestors hunted for a living, and they worshipped fierce and unconquerable animals to gain strength and shelter, this inner worship is reflected in Yi lacquerware. They believed that certain parts of the body of the beasts could have the effect of suppressing evil and obtaining power, and at the same time, it was also a kind of aesthetic embodiment. Therefore, wine cups with eagle claws, wine cups with cow's and sheep's horns, wine cups with pig's feet, and wine pots in the shape of a bird appeared (Zhou, 2020).



Figure 2.7: Pigeon Shaped Wine Pot
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press



Figure 2.8: Eagle Claw Wine Cup
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press



Figure 2.9: Cow Horn Wine Cup
Source: Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum. (1982). Atlas of Liangshan Yi Nationality Cultural Relics (Lacquerware). Sichuan Nationalities Press

After entering the modern commodity economy, new lacquerware types were developed in the Liangshan region. According to Pan (2022), four types of decorative lacquerware were broadly added: the first was the vase, which came in different sizes and shapes. The second type is the hanging or decorative plate, which is a round shape. The third type is the carved dish, the main feature being the addition of a carved pattern form. The fourth type is the ox and sheep head form. The utility category has also increased by four types: the first is a pen holder, mainly cylindrical. The second is the toothpick box, with square and round shapes. The third type is the massager, with various shapes, such as triangular, saddle-shaped, dagger-shaped, etc. The fourth type is a variety of eating utensils, such as chopsticks, knives and forks, cups and pots. There is also an abundance of jewellery types, such as combs, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, hair ornaments, and jewellery boxes.

Xing (2015) suggests that forms of Yi lacquerware were also reproduced in the interior and exterior decoration of buildings in the Liangshan region, such as facades, doors, windows and shelves.

The aforementioned research provides a relatively comprehensive summary of the types of Yi lacquerware, but the selection of visual samples is limited in quantity and not very comprehensive. This limitation in sample quantity and diversity may affect the representativeness and generalizability of the research conclusions. Additionally, these studies lacks a comparative analysis of lacquerware samples from different regions and historical periods, failing to fully demonstrate the evolution and diversity of Yi lacquerware over time and space. Therefore, it is essential to expand the range and quantity

of visual samples to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis, ensuring the reliability and broad applicability of the research conclusions.



Figure 2.10: Vase
Source: Photographed by the Researcher



Figure 2.11: Sheep's head
Source: Photographed by the Researcher



Figure 2.12: Display Plate
Source: Photographed by the Researcher



Figure 2.13: Ox Head Arch
Source: Photographed by the Researcher



Figure 2.14: Some New Yi Lacquerware
Source：Pan, H. L. (2022). Cultural Reproduction of Traditional Handicrafts in Yi Lacquerware of Liangshan(Master's thesis). Sichuan Conservatory of Music

Of course, the furniture category is also a new type of artefacts produced in modern times, such as tables, chairs and cabinets. It is also because the living customs of the current Yi people are influenced by modern society.

The daily ware types of Liangshan Yi lacquerware have undergone thousands of years of development with little change. Firstly, it is because the rationality of the moulding of the traditional ware type is an important factor. The moulding of Yi lacquerware meets the needs of practical use, after a long period of practice and practical consideration. For example, round, flat round and cylindrical shapes are usually used as daily utensils because they are more convenient and practical in the process of use, and they can meet the needs of the Yi people's lives. Secondly, the traditional moulding of Yi lacquerware is also influenced by the culture of the Yi people, which reflects the concept of living in harmony with nature and represents their persistence and inheritance of traditional culture.

However, with the change of time and the development of society, the change in modern life and the change of aesthetic concepts prompted the Yi artisans to create new types of wares to meet the needs and aesthetic pursuits of contemporary people. The main reason for this is the progress of technology, people's pursuit of cultural diversity and changes in market demand, which is also the inevitable result of the development of traditional Yi lacquerware.

2.5.2 Ornamentation

The decorative patterns of Liangshan Yi lacquerware originated from the observation of mountains and rivers, the sun and moon, flowers, plants, birds and animals, as well as objects of production and life, and through imitation, refinement and generalisation, a rich variety of motifs were formed (Wu et al., 2009). These motifs, which initially existed as natural and religious objects of worship, nowadays mainly serve a decorative purpose, but the rich semantic connotations in them have been preserved. The

organisation and use of dots, lines and surfaces in the motifs are quite ingenious, creating a unique beauty of the ornamentation (Xing, 2015).

Peng (2020) pointed out that, similar to the ornamentation of Yi lacquerware, a large number of the same ornamentation exist in Neolithic coloured pottery, which can be roughly divided into pictorial and geometric ornamentation. Pictorial ornamentation generalises and simplifies objective objects such as plants, animals, natural phenomena and people, while geometric ornamentation includes triangles, squares, circles, spirals and other geometric shapes. These two kinds of primitive ornamentation repeat and intertwine with each other, creating a rich decorative effect.

The ornamentation of Liangshan Yi lacquerware can be roughly divided into natural ornamentation, animal ornamentation, plant ornamentation, production tool ornamentation and other life ornamentation. Natural ornamentation reflects the Yi people's worship of natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, sun, moon, stars, wind, rain, thunder and lightning. Animal ornamentation contains patterns of totem belief and primitive worship, showing deep cultural connotations. Plant motifs have the characteristics of pictograms, which are mostly formed through the simulation and abstraction of common things around them. Due to the transition from nomadic herding to farming, animal motifs dominated, followed by plant motifs. Production tools and other motifs reflect the fact that the Yi ethnic began to use more tools after their farming life, and they also appear in the lacquerware ornamentation. Another distinctive feature of Yi lacquerware is that there are usually no figures appearing as motifs. This may stem from the fact that the ancient Yi forefathers attributed the value of life to all substances in nature, showing the equal value of human beings and animals and plants, and indicating that the

ancient Yi society was characterised by a tribal community that did not highlight the power of the individual (Liu, 2011). These motifs are usually presented as flat drawings, usually choosing local features such as eyes, horns, teeth, crowns, or a leaf or a flower bud, and applying simple circles, arcs, straight folds, crosses, and parallel lines to draw them, sometimes realistically and sometimes in combination. Such a way of composition makes the lines simple and clear, which can capture the characteristics of things as well as depict their images. Moreover, a motif or a pattern can be given multiple meanings, which is its main feature. To make the patterns concise clear and easy to produce, sometimes it is necessary to simplify the overall ornamentation to regulate, combine and connect them to form a unit motif or continuous pattern.

In Liangshan Yi patterns, there are several common ornamentation, examples are as follows:

i. Dot motifs can represent stars, sesame seeds, rapeseeds, or even grains from ancient times, or any granular objects.

ii. Circular and circular motifs can represent the sun, the moon, the corona, the halo, or the eyes of various animals, or even all circular and ring-shaped objects.

iii. The net and herringbone motifs are used to represent the spine of a fish, the wings of a bird, the spine of a snake, braided fabrics, etc.

iv. Spiral motifs are used to represent the eyes of cattle and the horns of sheep, etc.

v. Cloud motifs are used to represent ferns, shoots, sheep's horns, fire strikers and so on.

vi. The diamond pattern is used to represent garlic cloves, chicken combs, pumpkin seeds and so on.

vii. The shapes and meanings of Liangshan Yi lacquerware motifs have a logical relationship with the ware type of the object being decorated (Xing, 2015).

类　别	母题及释义					
Classfication	Ornamental Motifs and Symbolic Semantics					
自然物纹饰 Natural Object Ornamentation						
	1. 太阳及光束 2. 角数为 12，表示 12 个月 3. 角数为 8，表示 8 个方位 4. 角数为 4，表示 4 个方向	太阳	1. 星星 2. 菜籽 3. 芝麻	月亮	山脉	水波
	1、Sunbeams 2、The number of angles is 12, representing 12 months 3、The number of angles is 8, representing 8 directions 4、The number of angles is 4, representing 4 directions	Sun	1、Stars 2、Rapeseed 3、Sesame Seeds	Moon	Mountain Range	Water Ripples
动物纹饰 Animal Ornamentation						
	1. 鸡肠　2. 羊肠	虫纹	蛇纹	鸡眼	鱼眼	牛眼
	Chicken or Sheep Intestine	Insect	Snake	Chicken Eye	Fish Eye	Bull's Eye
						
	1. 鱼刺 2. 鸟翅膀 3. 蕨菜叶	鸡冠	公绵羊角	水牛角	马牙	
	Fish Spine, Bird Wings,Licorice Fern	Comb	Ram Horns	Buffalo Horns	Horse Teeth	
植物纹饰 Plant Ornamentation						
	蒜瓣	茄子	南瓜子	花蕾	花	
	Garlic Clove	Eggplant	Pumpkin Seeds	Bud	Flower	
生产生活用具纹饰 Production and Living Tools Ornamentation						
	1. 火镰　2. 鸡岔肠	火镰	金链	渔网	篱笆	栅栏
	Fire Striker, Chicken Intestine	Fire Striker	Gold Chain	Fishing Net	fence	fence
						
	烟杆上的绣球	矛头	窗格	缠线架	铜钱	指甲
	Embroidery Ball	Spearhead	Window Grille	Winding Frame	Copper Coins	Fingernail

Figure 2.15: Ornamental Motifs and Symbolic Semantics of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware
Source： Xing, D. Y. (2015). Design and Application of Yi Patterns in Liangshan. Sichuan University Press

The main forms of organisation of Liangshan Yi patterns are bipartite continuity, suitable composition and central dispersion (Xing, 2015).

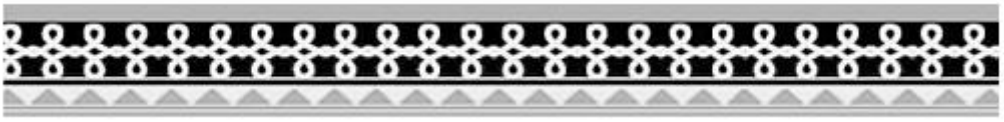


Figure 2.16: Bipartite Continuity
Source： Xing, D. Y. (2015). Design and Application of Yi Patterns in Liangshan. Sichuan University Press



Figure 2.17: Suitable Composition
Source： Xing, D. Y. (2015). Design and Application of Yi Patterns in Liangshan. Sichuan University Press



Figure 2.18: Central Dispersion
Source： Xing, D. Y. (2015). Design and Application of Yi Patterns in Liangshan. Sichuan University Press

Bing's (2000) study also shows that the structure of Yi lacquerware patterns pays great attention to regularity and layout. In unit square motifs, a circle is usually used as the centre and extends in all directions. Regardless of whether the pattern is simple or complex, a circle centre is used to control the whole pattern, making the picture both vivid and orderly, and giving people a feeling of beauty. The composition of lacquerware ornamentation can be roughly divided into the following types:

Single pattern: According to the needs of the vessel, a single motif is connected and combined to form a banded pattern or a central pattern.

Continuous pattern: mainly used across the belly of the vessel, mostly used for shallow-bellied types.

Unitary Pattern: Artistic combination of central motifs used in bulging and deep-bellied mouldings to form a unitary pattern, embellished with secondary motifs to set off the main figure and to provide a focused effect.

The existing studies provide a comprehensive analysis of the types of traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation in the Liangshan region. However, they have not sufficiently explored how these patterns are influenced by local cultural factors. Future research should focus on analysing the symbolic expressions of the ornamentation and investigating the cultural and social motivations behind them to gain a more complete understanding of the artistic characteristics and cultural value of Yi lacquerware.

Pan (2022) pointed out that different ornamentation appeared in the new products, belonging to the combination of modern and traditional forms, like figures and animal forms were also expressed. However, Pan (2022) lacks crucial research methods,

such as field investigations and interviews, and therefore does not delve deeply into the modern variations of Yi ornamentation in the Liangshan region. This methodological shortcoming may result in an understanding of ornamentation variations that is neither sufficiently comprehensive nor in-depth.

Ornamentation is one of the typical artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and is also the most expressive and embedded element of national cultural meanings. Taking dots, lines and surfaces as the basic combinations, there are both single compositions and complex forms restructured through basic motifs. Through the layout of the modelling and combination of the ornamentation and the combination of moulding, the pattern is expressive and symbolic, showing the unique aesthetic and cultural concepts, and conveying the Yi people's understanding and perception of the natural world and life. At the same time, the layout of ornamentation is also subject to some traditional norms and taboos in Yi culture, which ensures the continuity and continuity of the style of lacquerware ornamentation and national tradition.

2.5.3 Colour

The faces of colours refer to different things, reflect different cultures and carry cultural meanings. Therefore, colours may have different symbolic meanings in different ethnic cultures. Colour matching is a combination of aesthetics and craftsmanship, as well as a reflection of traditional cultural awareness. The Yi ancestors had a unique traditional aesthetic concept, which regarded black as honourable, red as brave and yellow as beautiful, and this reverence continues to this day. In Yi lacquerware, black, red and yellow colours are usually used for painting (Zu, 2016). Peng (2013: 240) also mentions in his study that "the colours of Yi lacquerware are no more than three colours, black, red and

yellow, which haven't changed much from ancient times to the present day, and the other ornaments are also dominated by these three colours, and the reason for this is because these three colours have special symbolic meanings for the Yi people. " Therefore, the colours on the lacquerware of the Liangshan Yi people have the agreed symbolism, black symbolizes dignity and solemnity, red symbolizes bravery and passion, and yellow symbolizes happiness and light. The traditional three-colour worship of the Yi people refers to these three colours (Xing, 2015).

Reflected in the visual manifestation of Yi lacquerware is that it impresses people with its strong and bright colours, which are highly infectious. The use of colour reflects the national aesthetic consciousness and spiritual qualities, and the three-colour view of traditional Yi lacquerware is also the most significant feature and unique. The three colours have a strong visual impact, and the brightness and purity are very high, which belongs to the "three primary colours" of the Yi ethnic group. This is also the reason why Liangshan Yi lacquerware is very easy to recognise and identify, and can be clearly distinguished from the handicrafts of other ethnic groups (Li, 2018).

Peng (2020) analysed the three-colour statement of the Yi from colour theory. Firstly, in terms of the three attributes of colour, black belongs to uncoloured, and red and yellow belong to coloured, which can form the effect of primary colour contrast when placed together, which is prominent and eye-catching. Due to the difference in in-process materials, yellow is less saturated than red, but the brightness is the highest, which can have a certain effect of reconciliation, forming a stable three-colour relationship. Secondly, from the point of view of the proportion of colours, black and red are the dominant colours, while yellow is mainly an accessory colour, and the symmetrical layout of colours is

mostly used in the shape of the vessel, which can produce a rich and mysterious pattern effect with a sense of balance at the same time, reflecting the aesthetics of the Yi people. Finally, in terms of the symbolic meaning of colour, the colour expression of Yi lacquerware is inextricably linked with the Yi people's view of nature and religion, for example, the sun, moon and landscape is a realistic combination of red and yellow colours, and the worship of fire is a combination of red and black colours. Specifically, the Yi lacquerware itself is a unity of colour and the expression of the meaning of the ornamentation, and the fixed ornamentation often has a corresponding colour to express.

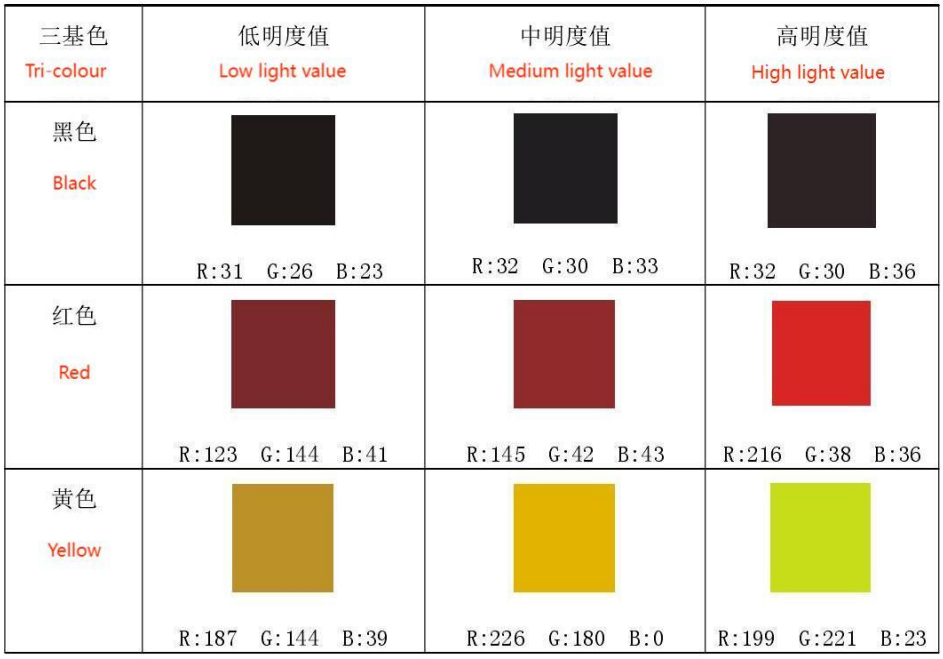


Figure 2.19: Colour Palette RGB Value Analysis Table
Source: Peng, Y. C. (2020). The Study on colour Culture of Yi Ethnic Group's Lacquerware (Master's thesis). China Academy of Art

In addition, Peng (2020) analysed the different performances of the three coloured lacquers in the domain of brightness values using a chart. The difference in colour appearance is due to the brightness variation of the three colours and the resulting

difference between warm and cold. A range of brightness values for colour lacquer modulation was also formulated and it was emphasised that the visual effect of traditional Yi lacquerware was determined by the brightness values of the colour lacquers. Xing (2015) argued that the common colour scheme of Liangshan Yi lacquerware was to use black as the base and red and yellow as the ornamentation colours for interspersing, which was because the Yi people have long had a subjective colour aesthetic awareness of the dominant colours. It is also emphasised that the red colour is a blend of lacquer and silver beads, and the yellow colour is a blend of lacquer and stone yellow. The choice of craftsmanship and materials resulted in a more stable red colour, but the yellow colour was colder and less bright, very close to the red, creating a trend of clear contrast between warm and cold, and a weakening of the contrast in brightness. These findings also explain very well why the colour relationships on Liangshan Yi lacquerware have different tendencies, which are very much related to the raw materials and craftsmanship. The aforementioned research primarily focuses on the symbolic significance and colour principles of the three primary colours in traditional Yi lacquerware but does not combine this analysis with specific lacquerware cases and colour schemes. This lack of practical case studies may lead to an insufficient understanding of the actual effects and cultural connotations of colour application. Further research should integrate specific lacquerware pieces and conduct detailed empirical analyses of their colour schemes to more comprehensively reveal the artistic value and cultural significance of Yi lacquerware.

"The colours of lacquerware are mostly red, yellow and black as the main tones, i.e. raw lacquer is mixed with vermilion, stone yellow and pot smoke respectively" (Bing, 2000: 33). In addition to the symbolism of colours having a source, analysed from the material conditions, the combination of colours produced largely depends on the

limitations of the productivity at that time. Therefore, under the influence of modern technology, traditional lacquerware craftsmanship is transforming, and the traditional concept of creation is also undergoing a transformation, which has led to a change in the way of transmission of lacquerware. With the change in the inheritance method, the choice of media also transformed. In Yi lacquerware, in addition to the traditional three colours, other colours are now being used. With the addition of the use of non-traditional colours, it will allow Yi lacquerware to maintain its unique cultural nature, but diminish the visual impact of the tricolour and be more in line with contemporary aesthetic needs (Peng, 2020). Research on the colours of modern Yi lacquerware also suffers from an insufficient number of visual samples. This limitation in sample quantity and diversity may affect the representativeness and generality of the research conclusions. Additionally, the lack of in-depth observation and analysis of the application of colours in modern Yi lacquerware has failed to fully demonstrate the interaction and evolution between modern colour trends and traditional colour usage. Therefore, it is crucial to expand the range and quantity of visual samples and to conduct detailed case analyses of specific lacquerware pieces to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

The change in colour principle has its positive effects, Yi lacquerware is injected with new life and vitality and can conform to modern aesthetic concepts. It helps to attract a wider audience and expand market and business opportunities. However, the negatives are also obvious. Unordered colour changes may lead to the loss of some traditional cultural elements, destroying the coherence and uniqueness of traditional art forms, and ultimately making Yi lacquerware lose its unique artistic characteristics and recognition.

2.6 The Origin and Development of Dafang Yi lacquerware

The difference with Liangshan Yi lacquerware lies in the fact that there has been an academic debate about the distinction between Han and Yi lacquerware in terms of its origin, craftsmanship and artistic characteristics in Dafang, Guizhou.

The most representative is Zhang's (2013) study, which points out that there are two distinct styles of lacquerware in Dafang, namely Dafang Yi lacquerware and Dafang Han lacquerware, and that there are obvious differences between the two in terms of types, mouldings, patterns, and colours. In addition, the birth of Dafang Yi lacquerware is much earlier than the Qing Dynasty, and the birth of Liangshan Yi lacquerware is close to the age, and the two Yi lacquerware types and ornamentation have the same origin. Han lacquerware flourished in the Qing Dynasty, and the unique style of Dafang lacquerware was created by Han craftsmen by integrating the characteristics of both Yi and Han crafts.

Yin (2021), on the other hand, argues that according to documentary records, from the Shu Han period to the early Qing Dynasty, the Yi people made use of local resources to create sturdy and durable daily necessities needed for nomadic life, which is Yi lacquerware. Therefore, he judged that Dafang lacquerware was first created by the Yi ancestors in the Dafang region, and later became a common cultural product of Han and Yi ethnic under the background of ethnic integration. Tian's (1992) records show that Dafang lacquerware in the Qing Dynasty was already a fusion of lacquerware crafts between the Han and Yi ethnic, only that the patterns and motifs drawn were different due to the differences in ethnic cultures.

Combining these two cognitive tendencies, the researcher believes that the artistic characteristics of Dafang lacquerware originated from the fusion of Yi and Han cultures in the Dafang region, which is a special form of Yi lacquerware evolution.

The prosperity of Dafang Lacquerware began at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, when Lady Shexiang, the leader of the Yi ethnic group in Shuixi (now Dafang), was born. According to records in the "Qian Book", "Continuation of Qian Book"("Qian" is the abbreviation for Guizhou Province), the Shexiang section, and the "Dading Prefecture Annals", in the historical record, during her reign, she vigorously introduced Han culture and crafts into the Dafang area, which made Dafang lacquerware become the royal tribute for a long time. Today is now stored in the Palace Museum of the Gourd-shaped Leather Lacquerware Gold-painted is the only representative of Dafang lacquerware tributes that survived, which presents the process typical of the Yi lacquerware depicting decorative techniques, the leather is also the Yi lacquerware peculiar to the body.

See the article "National Geographical Indication Protected Products. Dafang Lacquerware", the document defines Dafang Lacquerware as "Lacquerware products made of leather, high-quality wood, linen, cotton, natural yellow grey and natural lacquer, lacquer pigments, metal materials, inlay materials as the main materials, according to the Dafang Lacquerware production process and produced within the scope of protection of geographical indications." The development of the standard is closely related to the local natural resources and human factors, but this relationship can not be defined simply by a single ethnic form.

According to China's second national intangible cultural heritage list of traditional skills in Category VIII (Traditional Handicrafts Public Notice) items, the Yi lacquerware painting techniques of Liangshan Yi lacquerware (Xide County, Sichuan Province) and Dafang Yi lacquerware (Dafang County, Guizhou Province) became a national intangible cultural heritage list (see Table 2.1, supra). Combing through the development of Dafang lacquerware, Yi lacquerware and Han lacquerware in this region did not develop independently, but instead influenced and borrowed from each other, for example, Yi lacquerware absorbed the multi-colour system of the Han, and Han lacquerware fused with Yi thematic motifs (Duan & Zuo, 2022).

Based on the comprehensive literature and the production area, production process and product form of Dafang lacquerware, this study chooses to call the lacquerware born after the integration into Dafang area Dafang Yi lacquerware according to the definition of the national intangible cultural heritage list.

The reason why Dafang Yi lacquerware has integrated with foreign cultures and crafts is not only guided by the rulers but also related to the development of the population and the demand of the commodity economy. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, due to political and military needs, a large number of Han Chinese populations flooded into the Dafang area, changing the local demographic structure of predominantly Yi people, which led to the further influence of Han culture on the local minority cultures (Liu, 2019). For the lacquerware to be sold far and wide to various Han areas and for the market value of the lacquerware to increase, it was necessary to further satisfy the needs of the Han society, so the craftsmanship and forms became more Sinicised (Zhang, 2013).

In recent years, the development of Dafang Yi lacquerware has been roughly divided into three periods by period. (Zhang, 2013) The first period is from the founding of the PRC to the reform and opening-up period. After the founding of the PRC, the Dafang Yi lacquerware industry was rescued and restored, and in 1958, the "State-run Dafang Lacquerware Factory" was set up, with exclusive production and operation lasting for more than thirty years, with both social impact and economic benefits. At the same time, Dafang learnt and introduced the lacquer crafts of other regions, and the lacquer crafts were innovated, but the traditional commodities and crafts gradually declined. There are two reasons for this, one is the change in market supply and demand conditions, for example, the production of traditional leather cigarette cases stopped, directly due to the reduced demand for tobacco consumption. The second is the change of aesthetic demand, for example, due to the complexity of the process, the benefits are not obvious, and the leather body hidden pattern craft also shows a trend of decline. Therefore, during this period, it was difficult enough to protect and maintain the original lacquerware characteristics and craftsmanship level without the impetus of developing new products and giving birth to new artistic styles.

The second stage was from the 1980s to the beginning of the 20th century. Starting from 1982, due to the government's policy support, the enterprises made great efforts to develop new products, expanding to more than 400 varieties in terms of quantity and realising profits. During this period some private workshops and enterprises became the backbone of the lacquer revitalisation of the lacquer industry, individual design and craftsmanship levels were quite outstanding, but also repeatedly won awards for craftsmanship and design, the birth of several lacquer works of originality, promoting the presentation of local lacquer art style diversification. Especially from 1985 to 1991, two

major product categories were developed as pillar commodities, one is the Go Game box, and the other is the Chinese white liquor packaging launched in cooperation with Guizhou Moutai Winery, which greatly promoted the development of Dafang Yi lacquerware. Numerous practitioners have been generated, effectively protecting the inheritance of basic lacquerware skills. However, this seemingly prosperous situation also brought about hidden dangers later on: to pursue economic interests, a large number of production are single-type assembly line commodities, the lack of excellent designers and craftsmen, and it is difficult to promote the enhancement of lacquerware craftsmanship. Another is the lack of strong regulation, which makes the market produce disorderly competition, which is extremely harmful to the long-term good development of Dafang Yi lacquerware (Zhang, 2013).

The third stage is from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present. Liu (2019) noted that due to the further impact of the industrial society and the orientation of the consumer market, the consumer groups and market of Dafang Yi lacquerware have repeatedly shrunk, and the state-run lacquerware factory ceased production and closed in 2004. Family workshops and private enterprises also shrank, and the economic benefits became less significant. In 2012, the government of Dafang County put forward the lacquerware talent training model of "order training, targeted employment", using vocational schools to hold classes, while at the same time opening lacquerware workshops in the private sector. In addition, the government also provides subsidies to inheritors to continue the industry's technical inheritance. These measures have helped to promote innovation in lacquerware craftsmanship and design at a certain level. However, in addition to policy and market factors, the lack of professionalism and design talent is still one of the factors hindering the development of the Dafang Yi lacquerware industry.

At present, the Yi lacquerware in Dafang is facing the same dilemma as that in Liangshan, and it is also urgent to find ways to promote its sustainable development.

2.7 Types and Craftsmanship of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Dafang lacquerware has a wide variety of types and complex craftsmanship, both of which are constantly evolving and updating with the changing times. Initially, it only included simple daily living objects, and later developed decorative objects such as bracelets and screens, and the styles and uses of lacquerware were constantly changing. The craftsmanship also continued to innovate and develop during the basic production process of collecting lacquer liquid, making lacquer material, making the body, lacquering, and decorating (Yin, 2021). According to the information released by the State Administration of Market Supervision and Administration and the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China in 2018, it can be seen that the types and crafts of Dafang lacquerware are as many as eight departments, fourteen categories, and fifty-five varieties.

Under the impetus of Lady Shexiang, the type of Dafang Yi lacquerware changed from weaponry to household utensils in people's daily lives. These utensils include tableware, wine sets, tea sets and religious rituals. Through these types of wares, we can get a glimpse of the lifestyle and customs of the people of Dafang (Han, 2021). Tian (1992) recorded in the "Qian Book" chapter on leather wares that Dafang lacquerware had already existed at that time: "There are several kinds of plates, bon, cups, bowls and so on." A large number of types of daily utensils were exported to foreign provinces.

According to Yin's (2021) study, traditional Dafang Yi lacquerware can be divided into four categories according to its use: living utensils, decorative utensils,

recreational utensils and funeral utensils. Living utensils include tableware, utensils, tools, etc., to meet the needs of people's daily lives. Decorative utensils are used to decorate the indoor environment, such as screens, wall hangings, vases, jewellery boxes, bracelets, hairpins and so on. Recreational utensils are used for cultural and recreational activities, such as Guqin, lacquer cylinders, chess boards, etc. Funeral utensils are used for funeral ceremonies, including coffins and urns. In addition, for example, the magic tools used for the Bimo ceremony, such as the Dharma fan, Dharma hat, etc.; in addition, other types are no longer common nowadays, such as bows and arrows in the weapon category, and carts and boats in the transport category. By now, the production of funerary utensils has been discontinued, and other types of crafts are the main ones, with heavy artistic and aesthetic values, ornamental and collector's values, and practical functions gradually disappearing. The common issue with the above studies is the failure to provide specific examples of lacquerware and visual analysis, which may result in conclusions that are less credible and persuasive. Therefore, future research should focus on increasing and showcasing visual samples, and conducting in-depth analyses of specific cases to enhance the comprehensiveness and credibility of the study.

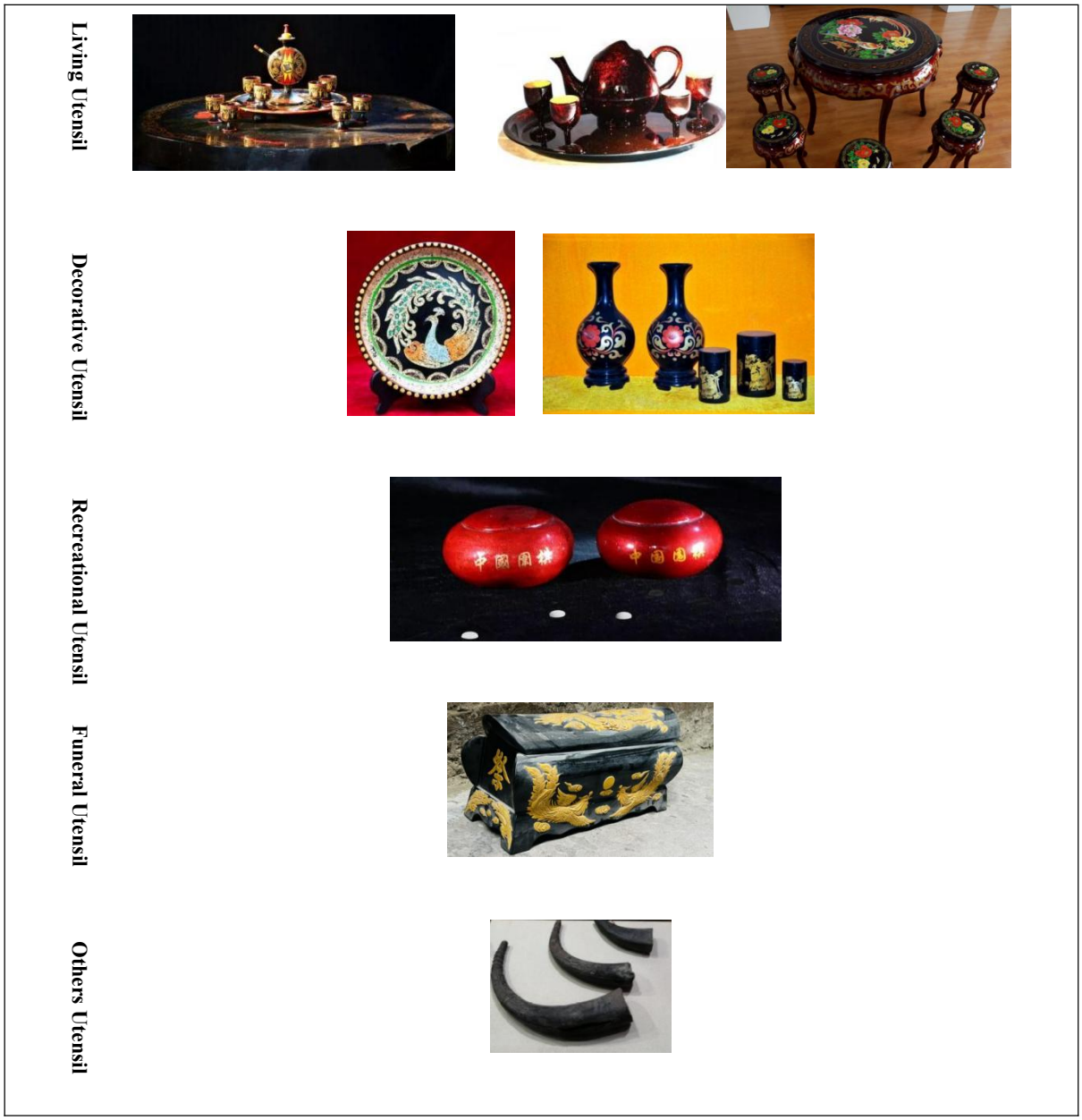


Figure 2.20: Common Types of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Source:
https://5b0988e595225.cdn.sohucs.com/images/20191223/9a644e8bb26b47479fb1881c152af817.jpeg
http://jgz.app.todayguizhou.com/data/upload/image/20210415/20210415183347_14453.jpg
https://5b0988e595225.cdn.sohucs.com/images/20191223/1e133e83be9d4c86a17e09ae56e8ab12.jpeg

Photographed by Luo & the researcher

The complexity and variety of craftsmanship of Dafang Yi lacquerware exceeds that of Liangshan Yi lacquerware. According to early historical records, Dafang Yi lacquerware started to use only cow and horse skins to make lacquer, and there were twenty-nine production processes. But now, starting from the stage of picking lacquer, it has gone through more than fifty processes, including lacquer making, body making, ash scraping, lacquer painting and decorating, which is very much in line with the production process of traditional Chinese lacquerware. This suggests that Dafang Yi lacquerware has gradually absorbed the Han lacquerware craftsmanship, and innovated and developed it to form the current more exquisite craftsmanship and unique style (Yin, 2021).

The process of lacquer making predominantly encompasses two critical stages: the tanning of raw lacquer, which involves its purification and preparation, and the subsequent creation of coloured lacquer through the addition of various pigments to achieve desired hues and finishes.

The body-making process is different according to different materials, and the lacquer body materials in the Dafang area are also various, the common ones in the early stage are wood and leather, and later on, they learn the Han lacquer craft again and started to use cloth, linen and paper to do the stripping process. Among them, the leather body-making process is the most unique and famous. The wooden body is relatively simple, similar to the wooden body of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, but the leather body and the process of stripping the body are more tedious and complicated. For example, the leather body will go through the process of making cowhide - air-drying the cowhide - making moulds - masking the cowhide - shaping the cowhide and stripping it into a body (Liu, 2019).



Figure 2.21: Leather Body Making (Shaping)
Source: http://ie.bjd.com.cn/

The scraping of the grey is connected to the shaping of the body and will be repeated several times as necessary and continuously sanded to shape.

Painting is divided into primer and top coat. The primer is often applied and sanded alternately with the plaster, which is done several times. The top coat is applied alone or after the decorative process.

The decoration is the key to the unique visual characteristics of Dafang Yi lacquerware, and the decoration techniques are divided into three categories: inlaid patterns, bright patterns and hidden patterns. In addition to the typical depiction techniques, there are also techniques such as carving and filling, inlaying, variegated tinting, and stacking lacquer, which are specific to more than one hundred kinds of decorative techniques. Among them, the only form of painting seen in Dafang Yi lacquerware is the hidden pattern decoration technique. According to Yin (2021), the so-called hidden pattern craft uses the traditional technique of variegated tinting to match two colours of lacquer, black and red, with one of them as the base colour, usually black lacquer, and the red lacquer as the twist, which is to form a certain thickness of dots covering the surface of the base

lacquer, and then to paint many layers of lacquer after it has dried, and then to sand it down to form it and then to finally reveal the irregular red colour.

However, the existing research on the craftsmanship of Dafang Yi lacquerware lacks a thorough analysis of how it influences artistic characteristics. This may require further combining craftsmanship studies with cultural background, social customs, and regional characteristics for a comprehensive analysis to better understand the artistic features of Dafang Yi lacquerware and their formation reasons.



Figure 2.22: Hidden Pattern Craft of Dafang Yi Lacquerware
Source: https://www.163.com/dy/article/DSU5MFH305370WBN_pdya11y.html

2.8 The Connection between the Artistic Characteristics of Dafamg Yi Lacquerware and Local Humanities

With the long-term development and changes, Dafang Yi lacquerware shows artistic characteristics that are different from those of other regional lacquerware. As an important living utensil of the Yi people, the decorative craft makes the symbolism and aesthetics endowed by the national culture centrally manifested in the carrier of lacquerware (Han, 2021). Unlike the Liangshan Yi ethnic region, which has been geographically closed for a long time, the Dafang Yi ethnic group has been exchanging and integrating with the Han culture for a long time, which has led to the lacquerware in this region to transcend the single-ethnicity form and become an object shared by multiple ethnic groups (Yin, 2021).

The artistic characteristics of Dafang Yi lacquerware are the result of a combination of factors, but the exchange and fusion with Han culture is the main cause, and therefore has an important status and influence, becoming one of the most important representatives of Yi culture and enriching the diversity of traditional Chinese lacquerware art.

2.8.1 Moulding

The moulding of Dafang Yi lacquerware is varied and complex, and it can be said that its complicated and exquisite visual characteristics first come from the design of the moulding, which takes into account both practicality and aesthetics (Li, 2014). Because Dafang Yi lacquerware is more often made by the stripping process, and because the Dafang Yi has been deeply influenced by Han culture and craftsmanship, it has more variability in the design of mouldings than Liangshan Yi lacquerware. At the same time, Li (2014) also pointed out that the Dafang Yi lacquerware moulding focuses on functional application first in design, conforms to ergonomics, and pays attention to the scale of proportion. Secondly, the decoration follows the shape, and great attention is paid to the imitation of bionic forms.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the number of Dafang Yi lacquerware reached more than 400 types. The four common and most varied types of ware types are vases, boxes, screens and furniture (Liu, 2019).

However, the above studies primarily rely on reference materials and do not employ fieldwork research methods, resulting in a lack of analysis of specific visual samples. Future research should incorporate fieldwork and interviews, collecting more

physical and visual samples for detailed analysis to ensure the reliability and representativeness of the research findings.

As a decorative object, vases should be one of the most common types of Dafang Yi lacquerware, with a large number and a variety of mouldings and sizes, ranging from small ones placed on a table to large ones exceeding three metres in size. Vases are also typical utensils that carry symbolic and aesthetic meanings and make excellent gifts (Han, 2021). Cylindrical, square, and combined forms are common for vases, and complex forms must rely on the stripping process.



Figure 2.23: Cinnabar-red push-light Vase
Source: https://www.163.com/



Figure 2.24: Six-sided Llacquer Vase with Gilt Flowers (Qing Dynasty)
Source: http://cn.51bidlive.com/



Figure 2.25: Huge Floor-Mounted Lacquer Vase
Source: http://travel.gog.cn/system/2020/09/04/017714919.shtml

Boxes are broadly divided into geometric and organic shapes, with geometric shapes commonly found in the square and round categories. Organic shapes are common, such as pumpkin-shaped boxes, mandarin duck boxes and lace boxes (Duan & Zuo, 2022). There are also imitations of animal forms.



Figure 2.26: Lacquer Box
Source: https://www.163.com/



Figure 2.27: Goose-shaped Lacquer Box
Source: http://www.gog.cn/

Screens are divided into folding screens, table screens, and hanging screens, with the difference between multiple and single panels. Square and fan shapes are the most common.



Figure 2.28: Beautiful and Fragrant as Flowers Floor Folding Lacquer Screen
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

The furniture class is mostly traditional Han style, and now the production of furniture class is scarce and the type tends to miniaturise, mainly a few cases of the type. In addition, the overall trend is transforming to the household category.



Figure 2.29: Lacquered Table and Chairs
Source: https://www.163.com/dy/article/F2DLJ7GI0524E197.html

Some lacquerware mouldings are unique to China, such as the ovoid shape of the immortal wine pot. This shape is also created using the principle of pressure, the same principle used in the flat round wine pots in the traditional Yi lacquerware wine set, and can be seen as a variant created after being augmented by the Han lacquerware process.



Figure 2.30: Dafang Lacquerware - Immortal Wine Set
Source: Dafang Yi Lacquerware Painting and Decorating Technology Transmission Centre

In addition, mouldings that are purely similar to or consistent with typical Liangshan Yi lacquerware are also found in Dafang, but they are mainly produced to meet market demand, and changes are made accordingly to order needs.

2.8.2 Ornamentation

Han (2021) points out that the sources of ornamentation for Yi lacquerware in Dafang are both from Yi ethnicity, which is closer to Liangshan Yi lacquerware ornamentation, but also from the Han ethnic and neighbouring ethnic minorities. The first is the abstract pattern, which is the traditional pattern form of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, and the hidden pattern, which is the texture pattern due to the unique process. There are

also figurative patterns, which are pattern forms with a realistic nature, including animals and plants. The third type is Yi script.

However, whether in Liangshan or Dafang, the ornamental motifs on lacquerware directly related to Yi humanities are still mainly botanical, living and localised, and animal ones are very rare. In addition, the lacquer ornamentation in the Dafang region is more varied than that in the Liangshan region, not only in the theme and form of the ornamentation itself but also in the form of its combination. The real reason for this is still the influence of ethnic integration, for example, the following picture is an ornamentation formed by imitating the cloud dragon pattern of the Han Dynasty, which shows the influence of Han lacquer craftsmanship in Dafang.



Figure 2.31: Green Needle Engraved Plate
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.



Figure 2.32: Lacquer Vase with Yi Scripts
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

In addition, traditional Dafang Yi lacquerware ornamentation is very close to Han folk patterns and traditional painting forms. The first category is folk motifs with beautiful symbolism, such as Five Fortunes for Longevity, Double Dragons Playing with Pearls, Dragon and Phoenix. The second category is the colourful flowers similar to brush painting, with large and luxuriant flowers and a single or two or three-piece composition, with peonies being the most common to express wealth and prosperity. Others include camellias, lotuses and orchids (Liu, 2019).



Figure 2.33: Leather-bodied Standing Dish with Dragon Design
Source: Photo Provided by Chen



Figure 2.34: Lacquer Vase with Fortune and Flower Blossom
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

Nowadays, the ornamentation of Dafang Yi lacquerware is more diversified, ranging from geometric patterns with a modern feel to figures and animal patterns that are either realistic or decorative. Even narrative themes are expressed, mostly on folk culture subjects, for example, Gao Guangyou has created a series of Yi ethnic story scenes (Duan & Zuo, 2022). However, the above studies lack an analysis of the various forms and

reasons behind the different ornamentation. This necessitates further exploration of the diversity in different regional and cultural contexts, combined with detailed studies of specific visual samples, to more comprehensively reveal the specific forms and underlying causes of these differences.



Figure 2.35: Ethnic Vase
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

2.8.3 Colour

The Guizhou Yi literature "Chronicle of the Origins - The Origin of Colours" says: "In ancient times, when hey nursed, the south-east and the north-west, were the four colours. In the east of heaven and earth, cyan appeared, in the south of heaven and earth, red appeared, in the west of heaven and earth, white appeared, and in the north of heaven and earth, black appeared..... red, yellow, black and white, born on the high mountains, grown in the deep valleys, and mined by skilled craftsmen, and the beauty of the world was all in the picture." It can be seen that the traditional colour aesthetics of the Dafang Yi

ethnic are the same as those of the Liangshan Yi ethnic, and the symbolism represented by the colours is also close.

However, the colours of Dafang Yi lacquerware are more varied, with white, blue and green in addition to black, red and yellow (Yin, 2021). So the five-coloured colour face designation of Dafang can be summarized as black, red and yellow, cyan and white. The use of five colours often refers to the coordinated use of red, green, blue, grey, white, yellow, purple, etc. as a whole, and the colour palette is bright and colourful and more ethnic (Chen, n.d.). While existing research on the colour schemes of Dafang Yi lacquerware offers some insights, it is limited by its narrow range of literature and lacks consideration of modern aesthetic changes. These studies often overlook practical methods such as field research and interviews. Additionally, they do not explore how social and cultural changes impact colour preferences in lacquerware. Therefore, a broader research approach is needed, with a focus on contemporary influences, to complete the analysis of colour forms and applications in Dafang Yi lacquerware.



Figure 2.36: Lacquer Vase with Cranes Singing in the Nine Marshes
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

The colour scheme of floral motifs or folk motifs with allegorical themes (mostly Han culture) would revert to realistic colour relationships or follow folk art colour schemes. Alternatively, they may be monochromatic with a single colour.



Figure 2.37: Fragrance of Magnolia Lacquer Plate
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.



Figure 2.38: Green Beryl Sand Treasure Box
Source: Product Catalogue of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

In contemporary society, Dafang Yi lacquerware, as a modern handicraft, pays more attention to meeting the market demand and consumers' aesthetic preferences, and its colour scheme has a higher degree of freedom, and the designed colour scheme can be more diversified and personalized. The producer will choose the colour scheme of the lacquerware according to the market trend, consumer preference and the trend of contemporary art. In addition, unlike Liangshan Yi lacquerware, designs of Dafang Lacquerware can also incorporate different materials and processes, resulting in a richer and more varied colour scheme. For example, the combination of materials such as gold foil, inlays and eggshells on the lacquer base, as well as the use of different craft techniques such as hidden patterns, impasto and inlays, add layers and texture to the lacquer design.

However, such a colour scheme has also led to the loss of the typical colour relationship and symbolic representation of traditional Yi lacquerware in this region, further losing the expression and identification with Yi culture and tradition. Although modern lacquerware design focuses on market demand and personalisation, it also faces the challenge of cultural preservation and inheritance while pursuing commercial success.



Figure 2.39: Lacquer Plate with New View of Yi Countryside
Source: Product Catalogue of DaFang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co.

The literature analysis of Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang regions is closely related to Research Objectives One and Two of this study. The literature review thoroughly explores the origins, development, craftsmanship traditions, and specific artistic characteristics of lacquerware from these two regions, providing a solid theoretical foundation for Research Objective One, which involves comparing the similarities and differences in moulding, ornamentation, and colour between Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang. Additionally, the discussion in the literature on the evolution of lacquerware's artistic characteristics aligns closely with Research Objective Two, which investigates the changes and impacts of these features across different regions and historical contexts. By delving into existing research findings, this analysis reveals the underlying causes of the differences in artistic characteristics between Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware and explains how these differences reflect diverse cultural and historical backgrounds. This analysis not only strengthens the theoretical framework of the

study but also provides specific contextual support and practical evidence for achieving the research objectives.

2.9 Literature Review on the Comparative Analysis of Artistic Characteristics of Yi Lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang Regions

Through the literature combing on the artistic characteristics of lacquerware and its relationship with local humanities in the two regions, it can be seen that the similarities and differences between the Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang in terms of material craftsmanship, mouldings, ornamentation, and the use of colours are relatively obvious. The similarities are that the two regions have traces of homology in some of the materials and techniques and the ornamentation. The differences are more numerous, including the materials, techniques, mouldings, ornamentation and use of colours. However, in past literature studies, direct comparisons between Yi lacquerware from the two regions are very scarce.

At present, only Lan (1997) pointed out that Liangshan Yi lacquerware originated from Dafang Yi lacquerware, that is to say, the origin of Dafang Yi lacquerware was earlier than that of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, and was introduced to Liangshan from Dafang region of Guizhou. However, the evidence provided by this research is limited to the records of ancient books and local historical materials, and this research finding has not been discussed and agreed upon by the academia. The researcher also believes that considering the human and geographical factors of the Liangshan and Dafang regions, the reasonableness of this claim has yet to be verified. For one thing, the Liangshan region is very remote and isolated, and the influence of Han culture is very weak. The years of record and historical facts of Chinese canonical books and historical materials are very limited and cannot be used as empirical evidence. The second is that there is no strong

evidence to infer who is the inheritor of whom. In addition, Zhang (2013) emphasises that Dafang Yi lacquerware is homologous to Liangshan Yi lacquerware, but has now disappeared from the Dafang region, and the surviving lacquerware is only Han lacquerware, which is not the same as Yi lacquerware. Zhang's (2013) analysis lacks detail regarding the specific differences between the two types of lacquerware. This lack of clarity undermines the understanding of how and why these variations occurred. However, according to the researcher's analysis in the previous mentioned, this study will classify the lacquerware in the Dafang area as the Yi lacquerware after the ethnic integration for research.

The geographical and humanistic environments of Liangshan and Dafang differ greatly, and these are precisely the reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of lacquerware. However, the current literature only studies the specific geography and humanities of the different regions separately, and no literature directly links and compares the two regions. The absence of integrated analysis limits the understanding of how regional and cultural factors contribute to the differences in artistic characteristics. Current literature lacks a systematic comparison and detailed analysis of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang. Therefore, this study will explore how human and geographical factors influence these lacquerware characteristics, providing a more nuanced understanding and clearer perspective on the formation of artistic differences between Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware. This research will not only address gaps in the existing literature but also enhance the understanding of the evolution of Yi lacquerware's artistic features and contribute to the advancement of the field.

2.10 The Application of Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics in Modern Art Designs

Learning and applying traditional skills to contemporary art is a key way to pursue cultural sustainability (Härkönen Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2018). As an important part of Yi culture, Yi lacquerware has a unique charm and rich cultural connotation in terms of artistic characteristics. To maintain the vitality of its inheritance, innovation and development in contemporary society, researchers have begun to focus on how to apply the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware to modern art design. This path is a two-way cyclic process. On the one hand, Yi lacquerware, as an art form with unique charm and cultural connotation, provides inspiration and creativity for modern art design. Modern art design can draw on the shape, ornamentation and colour of Yi lacquerware and integrate them into the creation of different designs so that the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware can be continued and developed. On the other hand, applying modern art design concepts to the innovative design of Yi lacquerware, combining traditional art forms with modern aesthetic concepts, enables Yi lacquerware to regain its lustre in contemporary society and attract wider attention and appreciation. This cross-border integration not only enriches the expression of modern art design but also promotes the inheritance and promotion of Yi lacquerware.

Fu (2021) proposes that the image construction of Yi lacquerware patterns in modern art design should follow the principle of diversified creative perspectives more than the research utilisation of a single perspective or single aspect. From a design perspective, the construction and reconstruction of Yi lacquerware culture are important in two ways. Firstly, images are the material expression of the national way of life, economic way, social mechanism, national spirit and national psychology. By shaping new images,

these social, cultural and psychological memories can be rearranged and reshaped to become part of the cultural force of the nation's native images in the form of national memory. Secondly, by drawing on design to display and manufacture new images, the indigenous culture of Yi lacquerware can be integrated into the modern production and manufacturing system, so that it can be revitalised in the new economic system and mechanism and gain sustainable economic momentum. With this design principle as a guide, she also gave a design proposal for the reconstruction of Yi lacquerware ornamentation on the theme of "Taotie". In the "animal taotie" ornamentation, typical Yi lacquerware motifs, such as the bull's eye pattern, the chicken intestines, the snake pattern and the horse's teeth pattern, are used to synthesise and redesign, resulting in a completely new design. It realises the inheritance of the national cultural heritage, preserves the traditional cultural symbolism, and at the same time brings a rich source of creativity for modern creative design. Fu (2021) highlights the importance of adopting diverse creative perspectives, but it primarily focuses on a single design theme, while neglecting other potential applications and forms of Yi lacquerware in modern design. Additionally, it does not provide a detailed exploration of how these traditional symbols are perceived and accepted in contemporary society. Future research should consider how to reinterpret and transform traditional cultural symbols in modern design to better align with contemporary cultural and market demands, and explore various design themes to gain a comprehensive understanding of Yi lacquerware's potential in modern applications.

To explore the great potential of Yi lacquerware in the market, designers should meet the needs of modern life through product differentiation and segmentation, find new points of convergence in the market and take the initiative to explore the market opportunities. As commodities with specific functions and meanings, Yi lacquerware

should be designed firstly considering its decorative and functionality, and secondly considering its collection value. In the past, single-function products could no longer meet people's diversified needs, so an important focus of Yi lacquerware design is to transform multi-functionality into daily necessities and cultural and creative products, etc. These products not only have practical value but also have the potential to be used for a variety of purposes. These products have not only practical value but also ornamental and collection value, beyond the pure commodity property (Chen, 2015). Although Chen (2015) highlights the market potential of Yi lacquerware and underscores the importance of enhancing functionality and decorative value, it does not explore in depth how to balance modern functionality with the preservation of traditional artistic features and lacks detailed methods for design innovation. Many design disciplines are actively using the design elements of Yi lacquerware for innovation. However, if modern functional needs are not carefully integrated with the protection of traditional cultural heritage, modern art designs may, to some extent, dilute or overlook the inherent cultural value of Yi lacquerware. Future research should explore the development of specific design strategies and practical methods to balance functionality with cultural preservation, thereby fostering the ongoing development and recognition of Yi lacquerware in modern society.

The ornamentation of Yi lacquerware is in line with the formal aesthetic principles of modern fashion. In Yi lacquerware, diversified ornamentation materials and expressive methods enrich the artistic image of lacquerware, bringing people a distinctive, pleasant and overall unified visual feeling, for example, matching the nature theme of many luxury brands in 2020. Similarly, fashion products using lacquerware ornamentation can include clothing, jewellery, bags, home textiles, etc., enabling lacquerware ornamentation to be uniquely displayed on different fashion items. By extracting and

transforming natural elements and embellishing them on different materials of the body, it provides a wealth of ornamentation materials for various fashion products and injects a constant stream of innovative vitality into the fashion industry (Gu et al., 2020).



Figure 2.40: Illustration of Bag Design
Source: Gu et al., (2019). Research on the Application of Yi Lacquerware Patterns in Luggage Design. West Leather

Gu et al. (2020) used the original work of Sangu Luggage Studio as a case study to illustrate how the visual elements of Yi lacquerware can be transformed and applied to luggage design, which is done overall by drawing on the point, line, and surface modelling elements of Yi lacquerware ornamentation and the principle of three-colour colour scheme. Gu et al. (2020) demonstrated how the visual elements of Yi lacquerware can be applied to luggage design; however, their study may not have fully considered the applicability and effectiveness of these elements in other fashion products. Additionally, the suitability and representativeness of the methods used to translate these traditional decorations into modern fashion items still require further validation.

The new design means is also very inspiring for the modern design transformation of Yi lacquerware. Extracting and integrating the typical national characteristics of Yi lacquerware through digital means for innovation, including ornamentation, symbols, colours, mouldings, materials, craftsmanship and other elements, combined with the content and information of local humanities and geography. These elements are digitally transformed and processed artistically using forms of advertising design, packaging design, visual identity design, display and exhibition design, digital photography, cartoon animation, game development, microfilm and so on. It can break through the passive and limited preservation mode of Yi traditional lacquerware, and make it present dynamic, interactive, and convenient for preservation, display, study and research images and digital audio-visual products through digital channels. So that its inheritance, protection and development can produce a wider range of social impact and publicity with less investment and faster dissemination speed (Mei, 2015). Although Mei (2015) highlights the potential of digital methods in the modern design transformation of Yi lacquerware, specific case studies and data are needed to verify the accuracy of these claims, ensuring that digital transformation can effectively and sustainably achieve its intended goals.

On the other hand, Chen (2015) points out that the cultural isolation mechanism is an effective means to be able to fully preserve national traditions in the era of change, which is very necessary for the preservation of Yi lacquerware forms. At the same time, to keep Yi lacquerware up-to-date, it is also necessary to utilise cultural self-awareness as a means to achieve its innovation. As far as the artistic characteristics of lacquerware are concerned, emphasis is placed on the development and innovation of craft materials, mouldings and ornamentation, taking into account the national and regional characteristics

as well as the aesthetic requirements of the times. Therefore, to carry out a proper design, designers need to have a certain understanding of the culture art, lifestyle and religious beliefs of the Yi people. At the same time, ethnic characteristics should be used as a label for modern products in the region, for overall comprehensive development, reasonable positioning, and mastering a unified appearance style, integrating regional culture and ethnic identity into modern products before they can develop products with unique practical and ornamental values (Zhou, 2010). Therefore, when exploring the relationship between Yi lacquerware and modern art design, researchers should not only focus on how to apply the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware to modern art design but also explore the influence and inspiration of modern art design on Yi lacquerware innovation. This two-way cycle of exchange and interaction not only promotes the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware culture but also enriches the diversity and innovation in the field of modern art design. Through this exchange and integration, the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware have been able to gain wider recognition and appreciation in contemporary society, while also injecting new cultural elements and visual language into modern art design.

By analysing the combination of Yi lacquerware and design elements in modern art design, we can open up a new path for the development of lacquerware art, as well as create a national brand with Chinese characteristics. This is not only an effective way to win the competition in the international art market, but also has important practical significance (Chen, 2015).

Although existing literature on the application of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics in design disciplines is relatively abundant, these studies often lack

systematic and in-depth exploration. Most research remains at a theoretical level, with a shortage of empirical data and practical case studies to verify the effectiveness and sustainability of applying Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics in modern design. Furthermore, research on how modern art design methods can drive the innovation and development of Yi lacquerware is still relatively superficial, focusing primarily on preliminary exploration. Both aspects require further investigation and exploration. Future research should include specific case studies, data collection, and empirical research to systematically examine the practical application of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics in modern design, including how to effectively integrate modern art design methods with these characteristics. This research is crucial for achieving Research Objective Three, which is to explore practical strategies for incorporating Yi lacquerware's artistic features into contemporary art design. Such studies will provide valuable insights into the sustainable development and innovative application of Yi lacquerware in modern society.

2.11 The Art of Lacquerware in East and Southeast Asia

In Asia, the term “lacquerware” broadly refers to products coated with resins from three main tree species native to East Asia, including Korea, Japan, China, Taiwan, northern Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, and Laos (Brunskog & Miyakoshi, 2022). Lacquerware art is one of Asia's oldest cultural expressions, with a history spanning thousands of years. As trade routes expanded, these techniques spread across Asia, evolving into a complex and enduring art form. Initially, Japan and Korea mimicked Chinese lacquer forms, but gradually developed their own distinct designs. Japanese lacquer art has achieved perfection in craftsmanship and refined aesthetic sense, particularly with the technique of maki-e, which has reached a level of near-perfection. In

Korea, the technique of mother-of-pearl inlay has been greatly developed, creating a unique style of lacquerware. Vietnamese lacquer art is renowned for its superb polishing techniques, which reveal the underlayers and inlays of different materials, presenting an effect as if emerging from deep within. In Thailand, lacquer masters have refined a decorative technique that involves using gold leaf on black lacquer, which is well-suited for intricate art. Burmese craftsmen, on the other hand, use earth tones and apply extensive decorations to carved and filled lacquerware to create a distinct style, which is clearly influenced by Chinese originals. The ancient traditions of Asian lacquerware have been enriched through cultural exchanges, but by the end of the 19th century in Japan and in the 20th century in other countries, they began to face the impact of industrialization (Kopplin, 2002).

The general process of Japanese lacquerware production involves body production, lacquering, and decoration. Each stage is subdivided into several steps, with meticulous multi-layer coating being a key technique (Brunskog & Miyakoshi, 2021). The maki-e technique is one of the most important in Japanese lacquerware, originating in the 19th century. Gold powder, available in over a hundred different sizes, shapes, and colours, is used to outline designs with lacquer, which is then sprinkled with gold or silver powder on wet lacquer to create diverse effects (Kellchi, 2002). This technique transformed Japanese lacquerware from the typical Chinese style (Tang style) to a Japanese style, eventually becoming known as the Kaga maki-e style (Arihiko, 2002).

Japan’s maritime routes facilitated the prosperity of Japanese lacquerware and its development alongside urban expansion (Kellchi, 2002). Starting in the 16th century, Japanese lacquerware was exported to Europe (Brunskog & Miyakoshi, 2021). At that time,

Japanese export lacquerware was a prime example of mixed art, combining Asian materials and decorative techniques with European forms, often based on European models. This effectively illustrates how the movement of goods, people, and ideas can merge within a single item. Japanese artworks inspired New Spanish artists to create folding screens and lacquer paintings. Mexican folding screens incorporated Japanese aesthetics and techniques, demonstrating the influence of Japanese and Chinese art on colonial Mexican art. Additionally, Mexico's practices in lacquering, gilding, and mother-of-pearl inlay were inspired by Japanese artworks. Art and cultural exchange is not a one-way process but rather a more complex blending process (Onn, 2020).

Rausch (2006) argues that the evolution of Japanese lacquerware is closely linked to significant political and cultural movements in Japanese history. These changes have highlighted the unique significance of lacquerware in various historical periods. The meaning of Japanese lacquerware has evolved from a primary religious function in the Heian period to a symbol of social status over more than 600 years, and recently to an institutionalised traditional craft. This transformation indicates that the significance of modern Japanese traditional crafts is shifting towards a new direction based on personal connections and educational experiences. Since 1974, national-level promotion programmes for traditional industrial arts have shifted the significance of lacquerware from a local traditional craft reform need to a national-level Japanese traditional craft, incorporating aesthetics, commodity, and social values. While local crafts have been used to attract national resources and promote modernisation, this can potentially undermine local identities. Furthermore, the lacquerware industry still requires national support to stimulate consumer demand. At the same time, consumer feedback has pointed out the outdated design of lacquerware and its mismatch with modern life. However, in-depth

research and utilisation of these traditional crafts at the local level also contribute to strengthening local identities.

It is worth noting that Wenying & Yien (2021) assert that contemporary Japanese lacquerware has found ways to integrate tradition into daily life, showcasing a unique aesthetic of living. Compared to China's craft heritage, where there is still a disconnect between "tradition" and "daily life," lacquerware in ordinary Japanese households is widely used as a historically rich craft. Based on the analysis of the current use of Japanese lacquerware, it is suggested that designers should focus more on the practicality and cultural content of lacquerware products to enhance their role in daily life. This suggestion not only benefits the modern application of lacquerware but also provides a reference for how other traditional crafts can integrate into contemporary life.

Korean lacquerware originated from China and evolved into a distinctive form, characterised by mother-of-pearl and horn inlays, reaching its pinnacle during the Goryeo period (Paik, 2002). According to Hyunseob (2023), lacquer was traditionally used primarily for the protection and decoration of wooden objects. Due to the differing natural environments and cultural backgrounds in Korea, China, and Japan, there are notable differences in the materials used in lacquercraft. Korea’s geographic position, being surrounded by the sea on three sides, combined with its abundant marine resources, allowed the mother-of-pearl inlay technique to become popular, creating a unique mother-of-pearl lacquer style. During the Goryeo period, thin slices of abalone shells were used for decoration, and tortoiseshell was treated with a technique known as "Bocai" (reverse colouring), with patterns drawn using silver or copper threads. By the mid-Joseon period, tortoiseshell was no longer used, and silver or copper threads were replaced by strips of

mother-of-pearl (Chon, 2020). Influenced by ancient Taoist and Confucian thought from China, the motifs in mother-of-pearl inlay during the Joseon period often depicted animals and plants representing auspiciousness and longevity (Krzysztofik, 2020).

Today in Korea, the application of lacquer has expanded into contemporary art, becoming a material with immense potential. Artists have enriched the forms and uses of lacquer through exploration and innovation. In modern art, lacquerware is being re-evaluated from a fresh perspective, transcending its traditional role as an artistic material. Previously, lacquerware was typically regarded as an important material for creating art objects, but this stereotype is being challenged to support freer expression and creative thinking. Fortunately, an increasing number of artists are recognising the unique material characteristics of lacquer and expanding its application in their artistic creations. Lacquerware adds unique artistic value to works through its colour, gloss, and durability, attracting the attention of many contemporary artists. These artists use the diverse shapes and materials of lacquerware to create works that align with their personal artistic pursuits. However, it is also important to note the potential risks associated with some non-traditional lacquer alternatives, such as cashew lacquer introduced from Japan (Hyunseob, 2023). This phenomenon reflects the transition of Korean lacquercraft from traditional handcrafted materials to modern artistic media, highlighting the need to carefully consider new materials and their potential impacts during this transformation.

Korean lacquerware craftsmen not only replicate traditional relics but also incorporate modern elements to create new works. They mentor young people to master traditional skills and encourage them to inherit and develop these techniques. Apprentices receive training in workshops and must pass regular examinations to qualify for continued

apprenticeship. These masters are dedicated to elevating the art of lacquerware and teaching lacquer arts in various institutions (Hyunseob, 2023). However, the transmission of these traditional skills faces challenges, such as the potential conflict between innovation and maintaining traditional purity when blending traditional and modern elements. Additionally, while systematic training helps preserve these skills, it may overlook the need to adapt to emerging market demands and technological changes. These issues warrant further exploration to ensure the ongoing development and practical application of lacquerware art in modern society.

In East and Southeast Asia, there are significant differences in lacquerware forms. Kopplin (2002) notes that, although the methods for harvesting and processing lacquer tree sap are generally similar across East and Southeast Asia, there are still considerable differences in the use of additives and colouring techniques. According to research by Anthony Christie (cited in Bourne et al., 1989, p. 144), Southeast Asian craftsmen have never used the Rhus verniciflua tree sap common in China, Korea, and Japan, but instead employ sap from other tree species, such as Rhus succedanea, Melanorrhoea laccifera, and M. usitata. The lacquer tree species in Thailand and Myanmar differ slightly from those in East Asia and also from the lacquers used in India and Europe (Voharn, 2014). These differences reflect the impact of various cultures and natural environments on lacquerware craftsmanship.

Vietnamese lacquerware is a cultural art product that combines religious rituals, applied art, and aesthetic functions, with no clear separation between practicality in daily life and life itself. Until the 1920s, Vietnamese lacquerware remained a unified art form (Phang, 2002). Traditional Vietnamese lacquerware features a wide variety of shapes,

encompassing both decorative and everyday items. Common decorative patterns include various animals (such as dragons and phoenixes), plants (pine and bamboo), landscapes (seasons and clouds), and architectural elements. The lacquerware techniques are rich and ancient, with gold and silver leaf and relief lacquerware being typical expressions of Vietnamese lacquerware. Additionally, coloured polished lacquer paintings and mother-of-pearl inlaid lacquerware also have unique artistic charm (Tran, 2002).

However, influenced by Western painting, urban intellectuals have differentiated Vietnamese lacquerware into a purely artistic form, namely lacquer painting, while other groups maintain its multifunctionality (Phang, 2002). Naziree (2013) also views lacquer painting as an important form of modernisation in Vietnamese lacquerware craft, despite the influence of capitalism bringing various popular cultures and the interweaving of ancient and modern, East and West. Nevertheless, lacquer artists choose to respect ancient traditions and highlight the unique identity of Vietnamese culture through this medium, creating new aesthetics and revitalising traditional art. The transition from traditional lacquercraft to contemporary art is significant in Vietnam's modern art history, but integrating traditional lacquercraft into modern society remains a complex issue (Chua, 2021).

The Vietnamese lacquerware industry currently faces major drawbacks, including limited production capacity, monotonous designs, and insufficient understanding of domestic and international market demands. Additionally, insufficient information and production capabilities may lead to inadequate craftsmanship, resulting in outdated styles, patterns, and designs, which affects the industry's overall competitiveness. Competitiveness is primarily determined by four key factors: raw materials, brand

recognition, technical expertise, and design. However, weaknesses in design significantly constrain the industry's competitive development (Teo et al., 2020).

Nguyen et al. (2021) suggest that craft villages are a crucial component of Vietnam's industrial and secondary manufacturing zones, playing a distinctive role in advancing the Vietnamese lacquerware industry. These villages are essentially guilds that rely on non-agricultural activities for livelihood and are renowned for their generational craft production. However, against the backdrop of industrialisation, modernisation, and globalisation, innovative technologies and scientific advancements have become key to addressing economic and environmental challenges. The Vietnamese government has thus introduced several policies to support scientific and technological development, including setting up funds to promote research and technological upgrades. Today, craft villages have begun to adopt modern industrial technologies to enhance productivity and product quality while improving pollution control. These measures have not only improved product consistency and competitiveness but also the health of workers, reflecting the ability of craft villages to adapt and innovate during modernisation. Despite these advancements, the policies for scientific and technological development remain unclear, leading to multiple challenges in applying modern technologies in craft villages. Small-scale, dispersed production methods limit further development of the industry, while shortages and over-exploitation of raw materials also negatively impact the environment and sustainability.

Thai lacquerware, influenced by Chinese lacquer techniques, has developed into a distinctive craft with significant interaction and borrowing from other Southeast Asian countries like Myanmar. This craft, deeply influenced by Buddhist culture and traditional Thai societal values, showcases a unique style characterized by multi-layered coatings,

carving, and the use of gold leaf (Yao, 2024). During the 16th and 17th centuries, Thai lacquerware reached its peak, with techniques applied not only to everyday objects but also to architectural decorations both inside and outside buildings. The complexity of lacquerware designs is closely related to religious ceremonies and social status. Although contemporary lacquerware is primarily used as home décor rather than everyday items, it still plays a significant role in special ceremonies and royal occasions (Sone, 2002).

The forms of lacquerware in a region are closely related to the local history, natural environment, lifestyle, and cultural beliefs (Voharn, 2014). Thai lacquerware can be divided into two categories based on ethnic origins: one produced by the Ayutthaya and Bangkok cultural groups, characterized by gold and mother-of-pearl inlay on a black background; the other by the Lanna cultural group, noted for its red lacquer on black Rak coating, creating a red-gold contrast effect. The red lacquer serves as a background for black decoration, with red lacquered carved lines presenting lighter outlines (Sone, 2002).

Since the 1960s, the Thai Ministry of Industry has introduced lacquerware techniques from Japan and Vietnam, which, while boosting product development for the tourist market, has also led to the decline of traditional lacquerware production and the loss of traditional skills. Synthetic materials and acrylic painting have replaced traditional materials to meet commercial demands and the mass production of low-end products. Revitalising traditional techniques through experimental design methods based on market needs and developing region-specific products can help renew traditional crafts. This approach encourages traditional artisans to collaborate with modern designers, incorporating local natural environments and cultural customs into designs to meet contemporary demands. Modern design needs to address consumer preferences, practical

use, aesthetic value, as well as materials, production, and quality (Voharn, 2014). While Voharn (2014) emphasises these aspects, the study mainly focuses on the acoustic properties and traditional designs of lacquerware and has not sufficiently explored the development of “new Lanna” style products that meet modern needs. This suggests that, while traditional lacquerware techniques hold significant cultural value, further innovation and improvement are needed in modern design.

Monphrom & Tong-on (2017) showcase the results of combining Thai and Vietnamese lacquer techniques with modern artistic concepts, highlighting innovations in both technique and craft. Their design strategies not only preserve traditional culture but also imbue modern features, meeting the demands of contemporary consumers through the incorporation of local cultural elements. However, Monphrom & Tong-on (2017) primarily focus on the exchange of lacquer techniques between Thailand and Vietnam, and may not fully consider the influences from other Southeast Asian regions, indicating that their findings may require further validation in different cultural contexts.

Yao (2024) indicates that the design and craft of Thai export lacquerware reflect a unique blend of Eastern and Western cultures. This cross-cultural phenomenon spans differences in subject consciousness and knowledge structures between Thailand, Japan, and China, viewing inclusive creative methods and craft techniques as part of cross-cultural expression. Thai lacquerware design is profoundly influenced by Thai local culture and religious beliefs, while incorporating cultural elements from India, China, and Cambodia. For example, common design elements in lacquerware include Hindu and Buddhist symbols (such as lotus flowers, auspicious deities, and animals) as well as traditional Chinese motifs (like dragons, phoenixes, and cloud patterns), showcasing the

historical exchange and blending between Thai and other cultures. This cultural fusion not only enhances the artistic value of Thai lacquerware but also promotes innovation and development in its craft. Furthermore, interaction with Western culture has introduced new design elements, particularly in colour usage, pattern combinations, and artistic styles. This Western influence has enriched lacquerware design and advanced its craft techniques. Future research should delve into the specifics of lacquerware design and unique skills to enhance comprehensive understanding of Thai export lacquerware craftsmanship.

The exact origins of Burmese lacquerware remain undetermined due to a lack of archaeological evidence prior to the 13th century (Tamburini et al., 2019). In Myanmar, there are six main types of lacquerware: plain lacquerware, carved lacquerware, gilded lacquerware, embossed moulded lacquerware, glass mosaic and gilded lacquerware, and raw lacquerware (Khin, 2002). The most common technique involves carving patterns into the base layer and then applying lacquer, with black and red being prevalent base colours. Modern lacquerware has incorporated synthetic materials due to the demand for painted colours. The designs on Burmese lacquerware are similar to other Burmese art forms like murals, sculptures, and carvings, featuring geometric patterns, wavy lines, floral motifs, scrolls, or Arabesque styles. Four traditional painting styles on lacquerware include: floral (kanou), dynamic animal figures like monkeys (kapi), large animals or objects like elephants and horses (gaza), and human figures (nari). Ancient Burmese art did not use perspective but expressed design intentions through lines and colour. Common motifs include lotus flowers, orchids, mythical creatures, demons, and celestial beings. Artists often paint freely to convey their creativity (Than, 2002). Although Burmese lacquer techniques were once introduced to Japan, significant differences in lacquer properties and processing methods exist between Burmese and East Asian lacquerware. Despite Japanese

lacquerware's influence, Burmese artisans have tended to simplify traditional techniques (Voharn, 2014).

Burmese lacquerware faces competition from plastics, bamboo, and rattan products, necessitating innovation in design, colouring, and decoration to enhance market competitiveness (Myo, 2002). In contrast, Yi lacquerware also faces similar challenges, with traditional techniques gradually being replaced by modern materials and designs in the contemporary market. Finding ways to incorporate modern design elements while maintaining the essence of traditional craftsmanship is a common challenge.

Galloway (2023) notes that Myanmar's art and heritage have been profoundly impacted by socio-political changes over the past century. Western heritage concepts were introduced in 1886 when Myanmar became a province of India, and colonial rule had a lasting impact on Burmese art. The proliferation of the internet has had a significant effect on artists and their practices, with social media becoming a vital tool for accessing the latest trends in the international art world. Additionally, the influx of foreign tourists has spurred growth in both traditional and contemporary art markets related to tourism. The rise of the middle class has increased demand for high-quality craftsmanship, while international exchange has offered opportunities for the revival of traditional arts and crafts. However, political instability and health crises have exposed the vulnerabilities of the Burmese art sector.

Existing research on the lacquerware industry in East and Southeast Asia primarily focuses on macro-environmental factors and craft materials, with less emphasis on design applications and the integration of traditional techniques with modern design concepts. Boonyasurat et al. (2022) highlight the need for modern lacquerware creation to

occur in a diverse and open social environment, stimulating new ideas through cultural exchange. However, the development of regional lacquerware styles has become increasingly blurred due to advancements in communication, and artisans face challenges related to limited understanding and training in modern design. The lacquerware market in Asia remains active, with artisans falling into categories of traditional skill revivers, practitioners of traditional painting techniques, and young artists exploring new effects. This blend of old and new techniques suggests that lacquerware art may present new aesthetic perspectives in the future (Voharn, 2014).

Currently, common issues in the lacquerware industry include insufficient raw material supply, decreasing numbers of lacquer artists, lengthy and low-paid production processes, quality issues, and lack of support and experience in design development (Voharn, 2014). Additionally, Brunskog & Miyakoshi (2021) point out that traditional skills and craftsmanship are often closely tied to specific spatial and temporal contexts, requiring consideration of individual choices and market demands for their dissemination and distribution.

Overall, while standardisation in production processes and materials has improved efficiency, further research is needed on how to effectively integrate traditional craftsmanship with modern design concepts. Future research should focus more on the application of design in traditional crafts, exploring how design thinking can enhance artisan skills and facilitate the integration of traditional crafts with modern markets, thus achieving sustainable craft development and improved market competitiveness.

2.12 Chapter Summary

The Yi lacquerware of Liangshan and Dafang are both typical national handcrafted arts, and they share some commonalities in the presentation of artistic characteristics, while at the same time, there are also major differences. Due to the different functional requirements, the availability of materials and the differences in production techniques, which in turn have an impact on the artistic characteristics, resulting in the presentation of similarities and differences in the mouldings, ornamentation and colours. Firstly, in terms of mouldings, both Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware would focus on common mouldings such as common tableware and utensils to meet the functional needs of daily life. However, due to the influence of regional differences, different production techniques and the consumer market, the mouldings of Dafang Yi lacquerware are more diversified and complex than those of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, and the production techniques are more complicated. Secondly, there are also differences in ornamentation. The ornamentation of Liangshan Yi lacquerware is often based on natural and life patterns and geometric patterns, which reflect the observation and understanding of the natural world by the people of Liangshan Yi ethnic and have strong national characteristics. While the ornamentation of Dafang Yi lacquerware has a homologous pattern, under the trend of ethnic integration, it presents more diversified patterns and motifs, which not only represent the symbolism of Yi culture but also the cultural influence of the Han people. In addition, there are also differences in colours. Liangshan Yi lacquerware is famous for its black, red and yellow "three-colour" culture, which has significant national characteristics and connotations. On the other hand, Dafang Yi lacquerware adopts the "five-colour" colour system integrating black, red, yellow, cyan and white.

The formation of artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware is closely related to various factors such as national culture, regional environment and lifestyle. These factors are intertwined with each other, and together they have shaped the uniqueness of Yi lacquerware art. Firstly, Yi culture has had a profound influence on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang. The traditional beliefs and values of the Yi people, such as reverence for nature and life, ancestor worship and totem worship, are expressed and embodied through the ornamentation and patterns of lacquerware. These ornamentation and patterns are usually closely connected with the natural elements, flora and fauna, myths and legends of the Yi culture, demonstrating the Yi people's knowledge of and reverence for nature and the universe. Secondly, the geographical environment also plays an important role in the formation of the artistic characteristics of lacquerware. The geographical environments of the areas inhabited by the Yi people are diverse, with mountains and rivers, rich vegetation and animal resources, as well as special climatic conditions, all of which provide rich materials and inspirations for the artistic expression of Yi lacquerware. Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware often reflect the local natural landscape and ecological environment in terms of ornamentation and colour, presenting unique regional characteristics. In addition, the way of life of the Yi people and the development of traditional craftsmanship has also had a significant impact on the artistic characteristics of lacquerware. The Yi people rely on agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts for their livelihood, and their way of life and traditional craft techniques have formed unique aesthetic concepts and artistic styles. The embodiment of this way of life and the inheritance of traditional crafts make Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware have unique characteristics in shape, craftsmanship and use function. Only

that the Dafang area, due to its geographic location, has long been under the influence of ethnic integration, absorbing more elements of foreign cultures and craftsmanship, facilitating an earlier and longer-term evolution. The comparative analysis of these artistic characteristics can be further enriched by considering similar studies of East Asian and Southeast Asian lacquerware, which reveal the influence of diverse cultural and environmental factors on the development of lacquer craft in these regions.

In addition, as a means of innovation, the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions can be widely used in the field of modern art design, such as home decoration, fashion design, and handicraft production, to inject ethnic style and cultural connotation into the design. It is of great significance to conduct in-depth research and explore the application study of Yi lacquerware in modern art design and how to promote the development of Yi lacquerware itself through modern art design, to inject new vitality into the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware, and at the same time to promote the promotion and protection of national culture.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the research methodology adopted in the comparative study of the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware. The study will adopt a qualitative research method, aiming at a comprehensive and in-depth understanding and exploration of the similarities and differences between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and their causes in these two regions. This chapter will elaborate on the use of methods such as literature research, field research, interviews and case studies, as well as the corresponding process of data collection and analysis, guided by the theories of Iconography, Order Sense Analysis, Formal Analysis and Design-Driven Innovation. The combined application of these methods will provide a comprehensive and in-depth perspective to reveal the cultural differences and commonalities between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions. By applying these research methods, it will enable us to better understand the occurrence, evolution, inheritance, and association with modern art design of Yi lacquerware in different regions and groups, and provide useful insights to promote the innovation and development of Yi lacquerware art.

3.2 Research Framework

This study adopts a qualitative analysis framework to compare and contrast the similarities and differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang regions, and to explore in depth the underlying causes of these differences in

artistic characteristics, to provide scholarly insights for an in-depth understanding of the expression of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from different regions. Then, we will explore the cultural, social and historical factors behind, it to understand the deeper reasons for the differences in artistic characteristics. Ultimately, the aim is to propose modern art design strategies and methods applicable to Yi lacquerware and to promote the inheritance, innovation and development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society. This qualitative research framework takes Iconography, Order Sense Analysis and Formal Analysis as its theoretical guide, and forms the specific use of research methods such as literature research, field research, interviews, comparative studies and case studies.

Data collection was carried out through literature research, field research and interviews, in which the researcher captured and recorded relevant data, including texts, images, design cases, observation records, interview transcripts and so on. The diversity of these data sources can provide comprehensive information and observation perspectives. Based on data collection, the researcher can use a variety of qualitative data analysis methods to analyse the data in depth. Among them, descriptive research can be used to summarise and describe the basic characteristics, trends and distribution of the data, providing general information about the data set. Thematic analysis can help researchers identify and analyse themes, patterns and correlates in the data, revealing underlying themes and issues. Comparative research involves examining and analysing similarities and differences between subjects or cases to gain a deeper understanding. Case studies, on the other hand, explore a specific situation, problem or phenomenon by examining one or more specific cases in depth, from which detailed information and data are obtained. The Interpretation phase integrates the data and findings with relevant theories, background knowledge, and context to gain a deeper understanding and meaning. Finally, application

strategy extraction is completed based on previous research findings, identifying and extracting strategies or methods that can be applied in real-world situations.

By employing these qualitative data analysis methods, the researcher can systematically compare and deeply analyse the collected data to reveal trends, correlations and potential insights in the data. Such analyses can help researchers gain a deeper understanding of the research area and provide valuable strategies and guidance for design practices and related applications.

The different components of this research framework help to identify and realise specific research objectives and are adapted to answer the research questions. For example, to gain an in-depth understanding of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from different regions and to promote cultural exchange and inheritance, as well as to broaden the horizons of modern art design, and to provide strategies for Yi lacquerware innovation and design practice. These are all in line with the guiding needs of this study. The flow chart of the research framework is shown below.

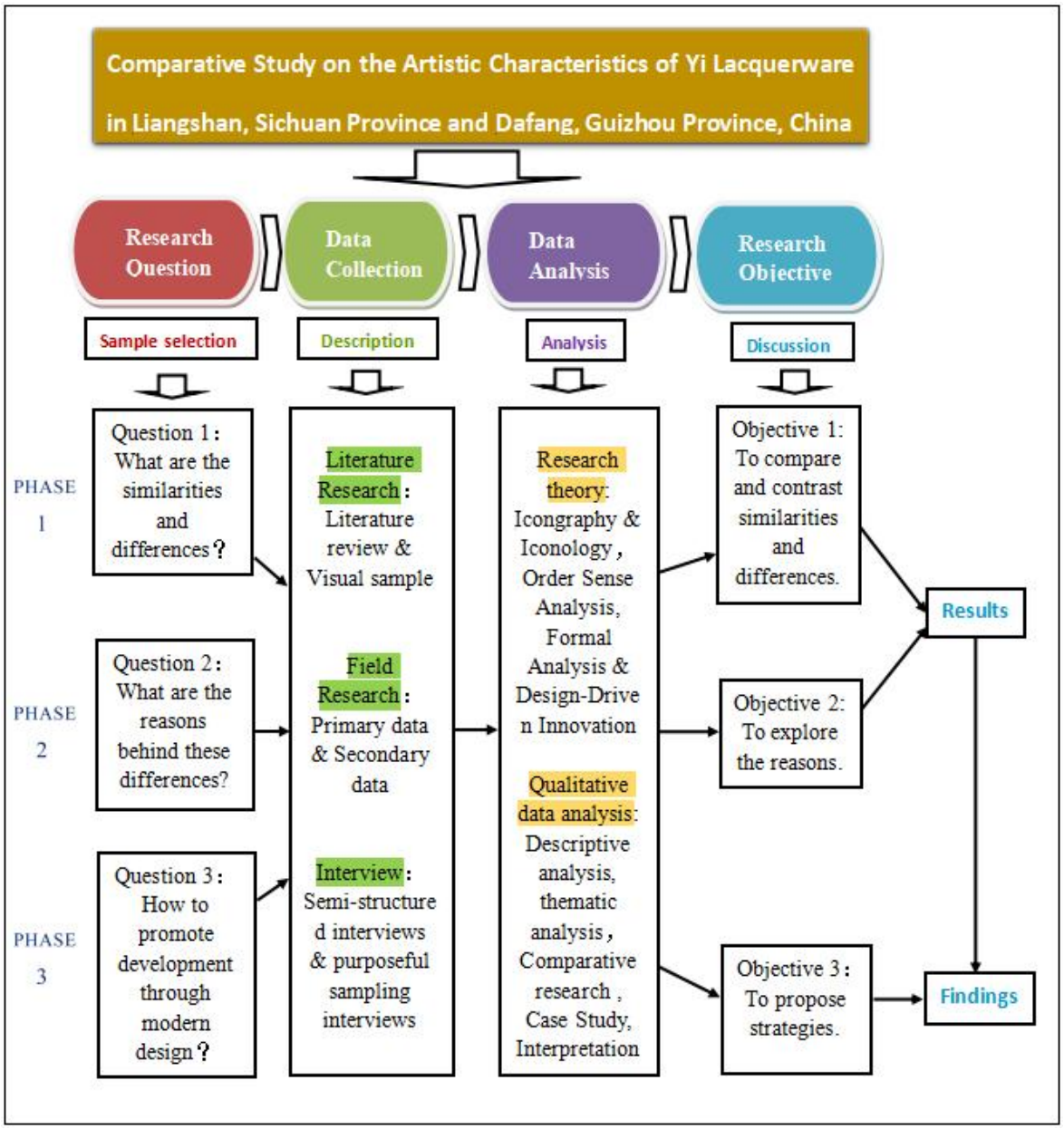


Figure 3.1: Research Framework
Source: Researcher's Illustration

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Iconography, Iconology, Order Sense Analysis, Formal Analysis and Design-Driven Innovation theory as the theoretical framework.

According to Kopp-Schmidt (2004), Iconography is used to describe or reconstruct the meanings of images that have been gradually forgotten due to changing times, so that art historians, experts and scholars can understand the nature of these works of art. Pictorialism is used to describe, analyse and interpret the visual characteristics of an image. Erwin Panofsky widely promoted this theory. There are three levels of Iconography which are pro-Iconography, Iconography and Iconology.

This study not only adopts Iconography but also incorporates Iconology as key theories for analysing the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware. These theories provide a structured analytical framework for understanding the symbolic meanings and cultural values embedded in Yi lacquerware, particularly in cases where the creators or specific creation contexts of many pieces remain unknown. These theories enable researchers to delve into the visual symbols and patterns to explore the cultural and environmental factors inherent in Yi lacquerware, even in the absence of detailed information about the creators or their backgrounds.

This study will conduct its analysis based on the three levels of Iconography. Specifically includes the following aspects:

i. Pre-Iconography (Descriptive Analysis): At this level, the study will focus on the objective description of the basic visual features of Yi lacquerware. This includes:

   Classification: The lacquerware samples will be classified according to moulding, ornamentation, and colour. This process will employ systematic classification standards to ensure that each piece's visual characteristics are accurately recorded.

Description: Detailed objective descriptions of the Yi lacquerware's shape, decoration, and colour will be provided. This stage will record the basic visual features, including forms, patterns, and colour schemes. These descriptions will lay the foundation for subsequent stylistic and thematic analyses.

ii. Iconography (Iconographic Analysis): At this level, the study will explore the cultural and historical background of lacquerware art features, including:

Stylistic Analysis: The origins, evolution, and symbolic significance of decorative elements and patterns in lacquerware will be analysed. For instance, the study will investigate how specific patterns and decorations reflect social status, religious beliefs, or other cultural values.

Thematic Analysis: The themes and stories expressed by patterns and symbols on the lacquerware will be identified. These artistic features will be linked to Yi traditional stories, myths, or religious rituals, revealing their specific meanings within the culture.

iii. Iconology (Iconological Analysis): At this level, the study will delve into the deeper cultural and social significance of lacquerware art features and analyse the underlying reasons for the differences in these features:

Deep Meaning Analysis: The visual characteristics of lacquerware (such as moulding, ornamentation, and colour) will be examined in conjunction with the Yi cultural and environmental background to explain how these features reflect broader cultural memories and social symbols. For example, the study will consider how the decoration of lacquerware interacts with Yi social

structures, environmental conditions, and historical contexts to convey deeper cultural and social information. This process will also explore the reasons for differences in lacquerware art features across different regions and historical periods, which may reflect social changes, environmental variations, or cultural integrations.

By integrating Iconography and Iconology theories, this study aims to reveal that the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware are not merely decorative expressions but embody profound cultural meanings and social values. This theoretical framework will aid in gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural memory and social symbols embedded in these lacquerware pieces, providing essential theoretical support for the study of Yi culture.

The Order Sense Analysis is Gombrich's theory of art research. According to Gombrich (1984), Order Sense is the human perception and understanding of the formal structure of things. It plays an important role in art and design by organising and arranging elements so that the viewer can perceive and understand the overall structure and order of things. In this study, the researcher will apply the theory of Order Sense to analyse the organisational structure, proportionality and layout of artistic characteristics in Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware to compare the differential performance. The different organisational structures and sense of order may also reflect the values, religious beliefs, and lifestyles of the Yi society. By analysing these factors in depth, we can better interpret the artistic expression and social function of Yi lacquerware in the cultural context.

Formal Analysis theory is a theory of analytical methods on artworks proposed by Wölfflin. Formal Analysis aims to deeply explore the formal features and expressions in

artworks and their relationship with artistic styles and the context of the times (Wölfflin, 2012). Through a comparative analysis of Renaissance and Baroque art, he establishes five pairs of opposing visual approaches, thus confirming that each era possesses unique visual experiences and ways of seeing. In turn, these visual experiences and ways of seeing were embodied symbolically through art forms. In this study, the theory of Formal Analysis focuses on the comparison of formal features such as stylistic elements, mouldings, colours and compositions in the Yi lacquerware of the two regions, and takes them as the focus of analysis to reveal their formal differences and commonalities. By comparing the differences between the different forms to understand the development and evolution of Yi lacquerware and to clarify its style and period characteristics.

Design-Driven Innovation (DDI) is a theory that places design at the core of innovation processes, emphasizing the importance of design as a strategic tool for creating novel products and services that meet both functional and emotional needs of users. As proposed by Verganti (2003), DDI shifts the focus from incremental innovation based solely on technology or user-driven demands to a more radical form of innovation, where design serves as a means of exploring and transforming meanings, cultures, and social values. The theory stresses that through design, it is possible to create new meanings for existing products, offering innovative solutions that resonate deeply with consumers' emotional and cultural values.

In the context of Yi lacquerware, DDI offers an invaluable framework for reinterpreting traditional crafts and incorporating them into contemporary design. By applying the principles of DDI, Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics can be re-envisioned not only in terms of aesthetics but also as a carrier of cultural and emotional

values that are aligned with modern consumer expectations. This perspective highlights how design can drive the evolution of Yi lacquerware, transforming its traditional forms and meanings to fit the contemporary market, while preserving its cultural essence.

In this research, Design-Driven Innovation theory plays a pivotal role in guiding the application of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics in modern art design. Specifically, the theory provides a framework for developing design strategies that integrate traditional elements of Yi lacquerware into innovative products for the contemporary market. By understanding the cultural and emotional significance of Yi lacquerware, this study explores how these elements can be redefined and applied in modern art and product design to enhance their relevance in today's global market.

The theory of DDI helps bridge the gap between tradition and modernity by emphasizing the role of design in shaping cultural meanings and creating new opportunities for traditional crafts. This research aims to develop practical strategies for incorporating Yi lacquerware’s visual and symbolic elements into modern product aesthetics, branding, and design, thus fostering both the preservation and innovation of this traditional craft in the face of evolving market demands.

3.4 Research Strategy

This study is divided into the following four stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis, results，findings and discussion.

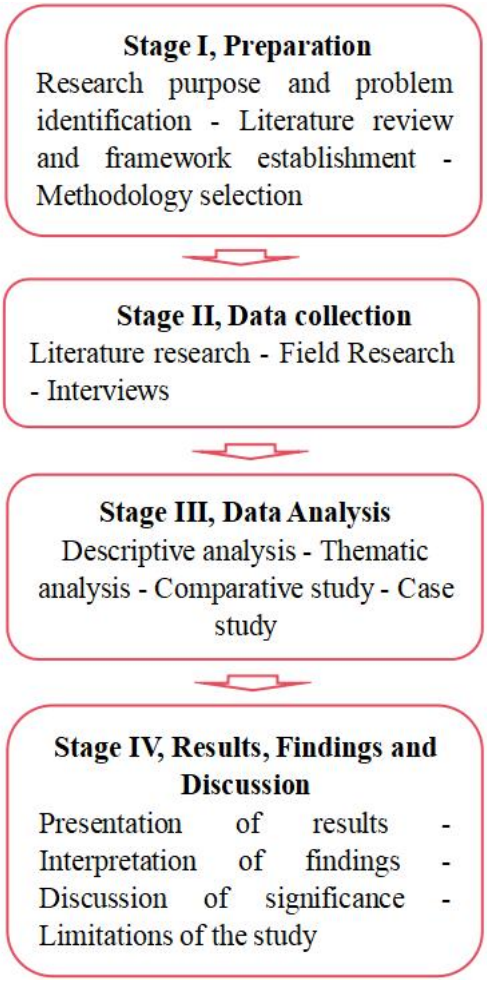


Figure 3.2: Research Stages
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Stage 1, preparation.

i. Research purpose and problem identification. The focus and attention of the study are established, including the clarification of the objectives of the comparative study of the characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions the provision of strategies, and the formulation of relevant research questions to guide the subsequent research process.

ii. Literature review and theoretical framework establishment. Through

reviewing and analysing the relevant literature, the current research status and theoretical foundation in the field of comparative study of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics and modern art design application strategies are understood. At the same time, establish an appropriate theoretical framework to provide theoretical support and guidance for the research.

iii. Methodological Selection. Considering the characteristics of the comparative study of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics, the qualitative research method is an appropriate choice. Commonly used methods include literature research, field research, interviews and comparative study. When choosing methods, the feasibility, reliability and validity of data collection also need to be considered.

Stage 2, data collection.

i. Literature research. Through collecting and reading relevant academic literature, books, journal articles, image materials, etc., to understand the history, development, artistic characteristics and cultural background of Yi lacquerware, and to provide theoretical foundation and background knowledge for the subsequent field research and interviews.

ii. Field research. Through field visits to Yi lacquerware craft workshops, museums, business places, etc. in different regions, to observe and record information on lacquerware production techniques, material selection, decorative techniques, etc., and to enrich the understanding and description of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware.

iii. Interviews. Conduct in-depth interviews with Yi lacquerware artists, craftsmen, experts, scholars, designers, and related practitioners to understand their knowledge, understanding, creative process, and cultural value of Yi lacquerware, which will help to explore in-depth the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions and provide strategies for its application.

Stage 3, data analysis.

i. Data collation. This includes summarising the conclusions and important information from the literature research, collating the observation records and interview records from the field research, and classifying, summarising and organising the data for subsequent data analysis and discovery interpretation.

ii. Data Analysis Method Selection. The researcher used analytical methods such as descriptive analysis, thematic analysis, comparative study, case study and interpretation for data interpretation and discovery analysis to discover patterns, trends and correlations in the data.

iii. Data Analysis. Through the above stages of data collation and analysis, the researcher can conduct in-depth interpretation and analysis of the collected qualitative data to reveal the differences and commonalities in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and its application strategies in modern art design. The results of these analyses will provide an important basis and support for the subsequent Results, Findings and Discussion phase.

Stage 4, results, findings and discussion.

i. Results Presentation. The results of the data analysis will be presented, including qualitative description, charts, illustrations and other ways to clearly show the results of the comparative study of the characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions and the reasons for the formation of differences.

ii. Interpretation of findings. Interpret and analyse the findings of the study, revealing the connection between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and its application strategies in modern art design.

iii. Discussion and Significance. The results and findings are discussed to explore the cultural, historical and artistic contexts behind their comparative study and revelation of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, as well as the potential revelations in modern art design and the significance and implications for the application strategies of modern art design. The discussion may cover the connection with existing theoretical frameworks, answers to research questions, and guidance for practical application.

iv. Research Limitations. Discuss the limitations and restrictions of the research findings, including limitations in sample size, geographical scope, etc., and propose directions for improvement and expansion of future research.

3.5 Research Methodology

This study is qualitative and has several strengths, as noted by Miles and Huberman (1994): in-depth understanding and revealing of the phenomenon, exploration of individual experiences and meanings, consideration of the cultural context and historical

environment, and an integrated research approach. This approach allows researchers to explore in depth the connotations and complexities behind the phenomena, and to obtain more comprehensive and rich information through detailed descriptions and explanations to reveal the differences and commonalities between the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware. Qualitative research methods also consider the influence of cultural background and historical environment, and the sorting out of the relationship between Yi lacquerware and the local cultural and social background can help to comprehensively understand the formation and evolution of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics.

To ensure the rigour and validity of this qualitative research, multiple strategies have been implemented. Firstly, this study employs triangulation by incorporating various data sources, such as literature research, field observations, and interviews, to cross-verify the findings and ensure a more robust interpretation of the results. Secondly, the research design includes a detailed plan aimed at minimising bias during data collection and analysis, thereby ensuring that the data accurately represents the phenomena under investigation. Lastly, careful consideration has been given to researcher reflexivity, acknowledging that the researcher's perspectives may influence the interpretation of the data and actively working to mitigate any undue influence. These measures collectively enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

In addition, through the use of qualitative research methods, combined with participatory interviews and design case studies, we can explore in depth the occurrence, evolution, inheritance, and connection with modern art design of Yi lacquerware in different regions and groups from the perspectives of individual experiences and specific

cases. Qualitative research methods are comprehensive and can be combined with a variety of data sources and research methods for comprehensive analyses, helping to provide more comprehensive and accurate explanations, further enhancing the understanding of the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware, and proposing strategies and suggestions for the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design.

This study will employ a variety of specific qualitative research methods to comprehensively and thoroughly explore the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware and Dafang Yi lacquerware. The following is a detailed description of these specific research methods:

Literature research method: literature research is a systematic method of collecting, evaluating and analysing existing literature in a relevant field to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of a specific research question or topic. Literature research can be conducted using a variety of methods, such as literature review, literature survey, literature analysis and literature comparison, which aim to review, summarise and synthesise research findings in the existing literature and provide a theoretical basis and reference for new research. When conducting the study, literature research plays a crucial role. It not only provides a comprehensive understanding of existing knowledge but also provides important information and a basis for the development of new research (Green et al., 2006).

Field research method: it is carried out through direct observation, investigation and data collection in the actual environment where the research subjects are located. The method focuses on obtaining real and accurate data in the natural environment and

providing insights into the characteristics, behaviours, relationships and other aspects of the research subjects through hands-on experience. Field research cannot be simply categorised into steps or stages in a linear model, as the field researcher has to deal with diverse social situations, perspectives and issues (Burgess, 2002).

Interview method: used to obtain detailed information and perspectives on a particular topic, issue or phenomenon. By communicating with interviewees face-to-face or remotely, using open-ended or structured questions and answers, the interview method can provide unique insights and detailed data. "Interviewing is a dynamic and interactive process that goes beyond a simple question-and-answer format. It is a negotiated conversation that allows the researcher to explore the complexities of human experiences and perspectives" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 652).

Comparative study method: aims to compare and analyse different things, phenomena or groups of people to gain insight into their similarities, differences and relationships. By systematically comparing multiple cases, cultures, social systems, etc., the comparative study method can reveal the impact and influence of different factors on the object of study. Provides a rigorous and systematic approach to understanding the complexity of social phenomena by examining the similarities and differences between different cases (Ragin, 2014).

Case Study method: a comprehensive study of the context, characteristics, processes and influencing factors, usually on a case-by-case basis, through detailed observation and analysis of a specific situation, aiming to reveal the complexity and uniqueness of the object of study to obtain detailed data and comprehensive understanding. The detailed study of specific cases provides rich qualitative data and helps us to fully

understand the dynamics and context of the research topic (Yin, 2018).

3.6 Data collection and Data Analysis Methods

This section outlines the methods used for data collection and analysis in the study. The data collection process involves gathering relevant information from various sources, while the data analysis focuses on interpreting and drawing conclusions from the collected data.

3.6.1 Data Collection Tools

Literature research: collecting, reading and collating academic research and literature related to the characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware and related design cases, including literature descriptions and visual samples. The literature research was primarily conducted through academic databases such as CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), Google Scholar, and the university's digital library. Additionally, relevant books, research reports, and conference papers were reviewed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research and literature in the related field.

To ensure a rigorous literature review, the following steps were taken:

i. Literature Screening: Sources were initially identified through keyword searches using specific terms related to Yi lacquerware and its artistic characteristics. The initial pool of literature was then screened based on relevance to the research objectives, publication date, and the credibility of the sources.

ii. Detailed Analysis: Selected literature was thoroughly analyzed to extract key insights and visual samples. This involved reviewing the methodologies, findings, and theoretical frameworks used in the studies. A systematic approach was adopted to categorize the information based on themes and relevance to the study.

iii. Integration of Findings: The findings from the literature were synthesized and integrated into the research by comparing and contrasting with the data collected from fieldwork. This integration helped in contextualizing the study and validating the research results by aligning them with existing knowledge and identifying gaps that the current research addresses.

Fieldwork: The fieldwork involved observing, recording, and experiencing the Yi lacquerware production process and artistic characteristics directly in the field. The study followed a systematic approach to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the gathered information. The fieldwork was conducted over several visits between September 2021 and October 2022 at key locations, including Xichang City, Xide County, and Yuexi County in Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, as well as Dafang County and Bijie City in Guizhou Province.

The data collection was conducted in a systematic manner to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the gathered information. To detail the methodology:

i. Sample Selection: Key sites for the fieldwork were selected based on their significance in Yi lacquerware production. Specific workshops and production

centers were chosen to provide a representative sample of the production process and artistic characteristics.

ii. Structured Observation: A structured observation guide was developed to ensure consistency in data collection. Each field visit was meticulously planned with specific objectives and tasks, focusing on different aspects of the production process and artistic features.

iii. Data Collection: Data collection involved detailed observations, photographic documentation, and recording of production processes. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage of materials, techniques, and artistic characteristics.

iv. Interview Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with local artists, craftsmen, and experts specializing in Yi lacquerware. The interviews included predetermined questions and follow-up inquiries based on responses, allowing for in-depth exploration of traditional techniques, cultural significance, and artistic practices. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

v. Data Analysis: Collected data was analyzed to identify patterns, commonalities, and differences in the production techniques and artistic features of Yi lacquerware. This analysis involved cross-referencing observations with interviews and literature to build a comprehensive understanding of the Yi lacquerware art form.

Based on the previous two data collection methods, the visual samples will become very important analytical information for subsequent research. Sampling methods

play a crucial role in ensuring objectivity in programme evaluations (Magnani, 1999). Firstly, the sampling plan was determined based on the research questions and research objectives of this study. The targeted sampling method was used to determine the visual samples as Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang regions, and then stratified sampling was used to determine the number of samples in terms of the time of production and type of division of Yi lacquerware. Stratified sampling is a more complicated sampling method and requires more detailed supporting data (Fricker, 2008). Therefore, judgemental sampling methods were then combined to determine which specific Yi lacquerware was a suitable visual sample.

The steps involved in the process include:

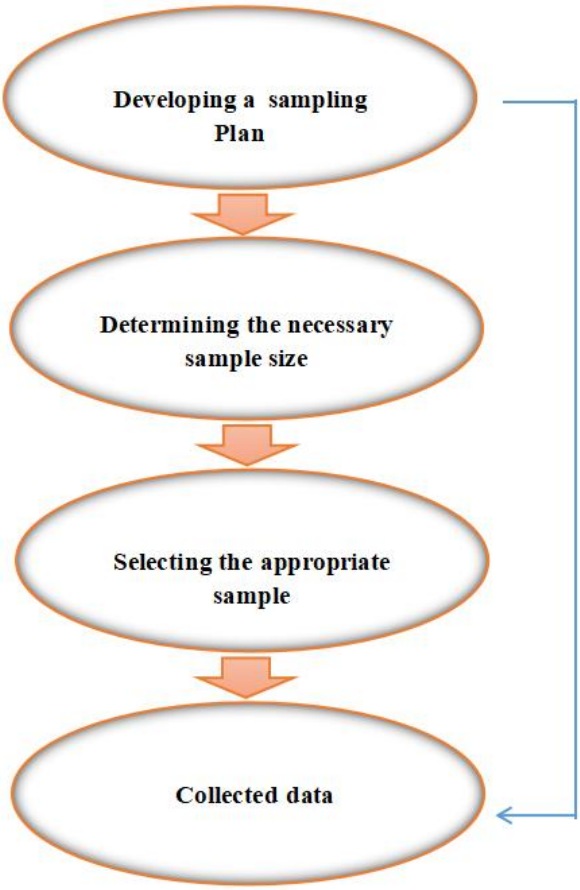


Figure 3.3： Data Collection Steps
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The sample frame consists of all the elements or individual observations within the target population, and it serves as the basis from which the sample will be selected (Fricker, 2008). In this study, the sampling frame is shown in the table below:

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

Objects of the study	Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan Province and Dafang, Guizhou Province
Target sites	Xichang City, Xide County, and Yuexi County in Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province, and Dafang County in Guizhou Province
Sample type	Traditional Yi lacquerware and modern Yi lacquerware
Sample selection methods	Target, stratified and judgemental sampling
Sample size	A certain number of samples of Yi lacquerware were selected from each of the two locations to ensure that the samples were representative and statistically significant.
Record of sample information	Name or type of Yi lacquerware (e.g. tableware, wine set, tea set, etc.) Information of the maker (Remarks if any, including maker's name, ethnic group, etc.) Place of production (either Liangshan or Dafang) Date or era of production (Remarks if any) Description of the moulding, ornamentation, colour and other characteristics of the ware Photographs or images

3.6.2 Selection of Visual Samples

As described in the previous section, the visual samples to be compared in this study were determined based on the research questions and research objectives from the Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan and Dafang, Guizhou, and the literature review and field research had been conducted earlier with prior experience of the target samples (Shively, 2012). Therefore, a combination of the target sampling method and stratified sampling method was used to complete the determination of the sample target and sample size for this study. Due to the deep roots of the historical development of Yi lacquerware in

the two regions, the large period and the complicated samples, to achieve the credibility and feasibility of the study, the first stratified sample set will be established by the time axis, and then the second to third stratified visual sample set will be established by the specific Yi lacquerware mouldings, ornamentation and colours. This will then be combined with judgement sampling to determine the appropriate specific samples, which requires the researcher to make specific choices according to the needs of the study (Fricker, 2008).

To ensure a systematic approach to the collection of visual samples, the data collection process involved several steps:

i. Sample Identification: Potential samples were initially identified through a comprehensive literature review, including historical records and previous studies on Yi lacquerware. This helped in determining key samples of historical and artistic value.

ii. Fieldwork:Field visits were conducted to museums, lacquerware workshops and factories, as well as markets in Liangshan Prefecture and Dafang County, including Xichang, Xide, Yuexi, and Dafang. During these visits, samples were photographed, documented, and catalogued. Additionally, contemporary Yi lacquerware samples were sourced directly from lacquer artists' studios, lacquerware factories, and local markets. A total of over 120 visual samples were collected, ensuring balanced representation from both regions.

iii. Sampling Techniques:

Sampling Criteria: A purposive sampling method was employed to ensure the representativeness of the samples. Samples were selected based on their historical value and modern innovation.

Stratified Sampling: Based on the research questions and objectives, the samples were stratified. Initially, a first-tier sampling set was established according to the chronological timeline. Subsequently, second- to third-tier sampling sets were created based on specific lacquerware mouldings, decorations, and colours. This stratified sampling approach helps ensure data comprehensiveness and representativeness. Judgmental sampling was then used to select specific samples based on research needs to enhance the credibility and feasibility of the study.

Sample Size: A total of over 120 visual samples were collected, including 57 traditional lacquerware samples and 47 modern lacquerware samples. The selection of samples considered various regions and production backgrounds to ensure data comprehensiveness and diversity.

Sample Processing: Each sample was meticulously recorded, including its image, a description of its artistic features, the year of production, and its provenance. Samples were numbered, classified, and stored to facilitate subsequent analysis and comparison.

According to the literature and fieldwork, Yi lacquerware in Dafang formed and flourished during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and the lacquerware objects from earlier

periods are no longer detectable, so there are no visual samples to support comparisons. In addition, before the establishment of the PRC, both regions had already held more lacquerware types and formed more fixed specifications, which would not be easily broken. However, after the establishment of the PRC, the change in social structure, the promotion of national policy, the deepening of cultural communication, and even the stimulation of the commodity economy after the reform and opening up, etc. resulted in a considerable change in the lacquerware production from craftsmanship to form in the two places, with an increase in the variety of lacquerware and an obvious evolution of its artistic characteristics.

Yi lacquerware from the Ming and Qing dynasties up until the founding of the People's Republic of China was selected as a sample of traditional Yi lacquerware, specifically screened based on mouldings, ornamentation, and colours. Representative samples of traditional lacquerware were identified through the review of historical documents, museum records, and archaeological reports. These sources included museum catalogues on lacquerware collections and relevant research papers. In addition, fieldwork conducted in Xichang City, Xide, and Yuexi Counties in Liangshan Prefecture, as well as in Dafang County in Guizhou Province , resulted in the collection of representative traditional lacquerware samples. These samples, obtained from local museums, craftsmen's workshops, lacquerware shops, and factories, encompassed traditional mouldings, ornamentation, and colours, effectively covering the main artistic features.

For the selection of modern Yi lacquerware samples, those created from the founding of the People's Republic of China to the present day were chosen, with a focus on the addition of new mouldings, ornamentation, and colours. The latest trends and design

changes in modern lacquerware production were investigated, including new samples found in production and on the market, ensuring that the changes and innovations in modern Yi lacquerware were reflected. Visits to emerging lacquerware production factories and design studios provided further samples representing contemporary artistic styles.

The traditional lacquerware types are divided into four types: tableware and wine sets, utensils for living life, and weapons and instruments for Bimo’s conjuration. Tableware and wine sets, including bowls, plates, cups, and pots, are the most common and widely used types of lacquerware. Utensils for living life, which encompass storage containers, musical instruments, horse harnesses, and vases, are more diverse in type. Weapons include protective gear and gunpowder barrels. Bimo's ritual instruments, which hold unique religious significance, share with weapons a relatively fixed and limited range of types, making them the least varied among all categories.

Modern lacquerware is specifically divided into four types: tableware, wine and tea sets, vases and decorative ornaments, cultural and creative products, furniture and home decoration, with tableware. Modern tableware, wine, and tea sets are often presented as sets, featuring diverse design styles and a wide range of types. Vases and decorative ornaments come in numerous varieties, showcasing innovative design breakthroughs. The cultural and creative products category combines traditional craftsmanship with modern design, highlighting unique artistic qualities. Furniture and home decoration focus on practicality and ornamentation, reflecting the multifunctionality and aesthetic appeal of contemporary lacquerware. Wine and tea sets, vases and cultural and creative products having the most varieties.

Under these four second-level sample classifications, the corresponding representative ware types are then selected to develop into third-level sample types. This is illustrated in the figure below:

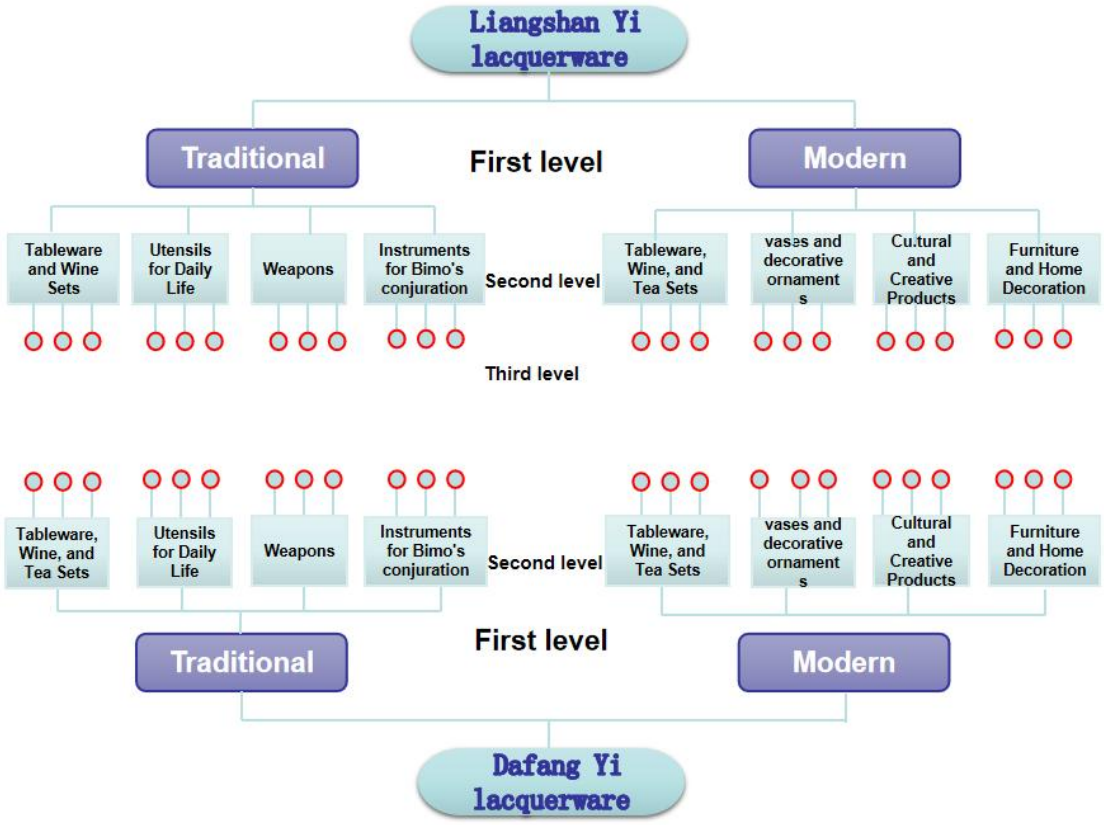


Figure 3.4: Determining Suitable Samples 1
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Traditional lacquerware ornamentation is classified into four types according to their contents: natural, plant, animal and things related to life. Modern lacquerware ornamentation is divided into four types: plants, animals, figures and scenes, and others. Under these four second-level sample classifications, representational ornamentation, abstract ornamentation and symbolic ornamentation are selected to develop into the third-

level sample types. Under the third level of sample types, we select the form of ornament composition as a single pattern, fitting pattern and continuous pattern to develop into the fourth level of sample types. These samples were collected and identified from traditional and modern Yi lacquerware through literature records, museum collections, and fieldwork in regions known for Yi lacquerware production. This is illustrated in the figure below:

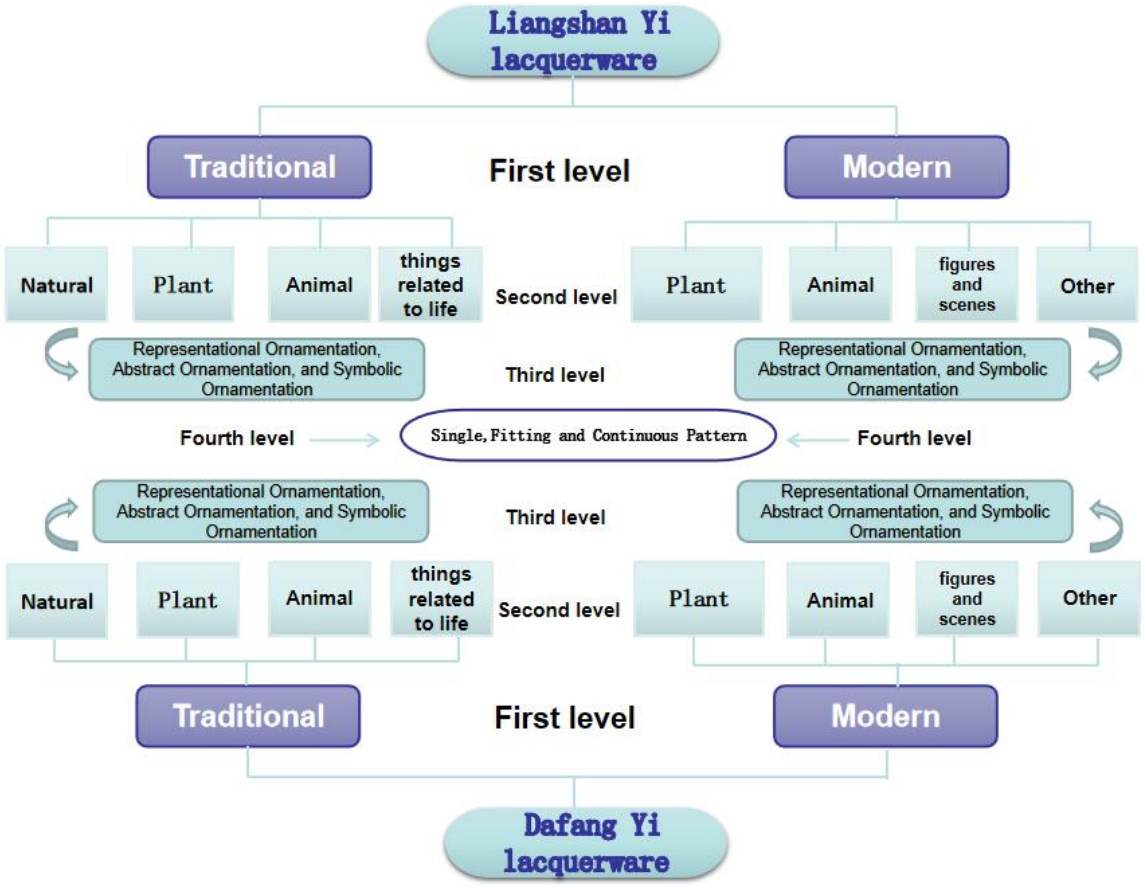


Figure 3.5: Determining Suitable Samples 2
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Traditional lacquerware colours are divided into two types, three-colour and five-colour, according to colour appearance. Modern lacquerware colours are divided into two types, retro and innovative, according to colour appearance. Under these two second-level sample classifications, the specific design solutions of colour in Yi lacquerware, such

as colour selection, colour relationships and colour emotions are selected to develop into the third-level sample types. These samples were collected and identified from traditional and modern Yi lacquerware through literature records, museum collections, and fieldwork in regions known for Yi lacquerware production. This is illustrated in the figure below:

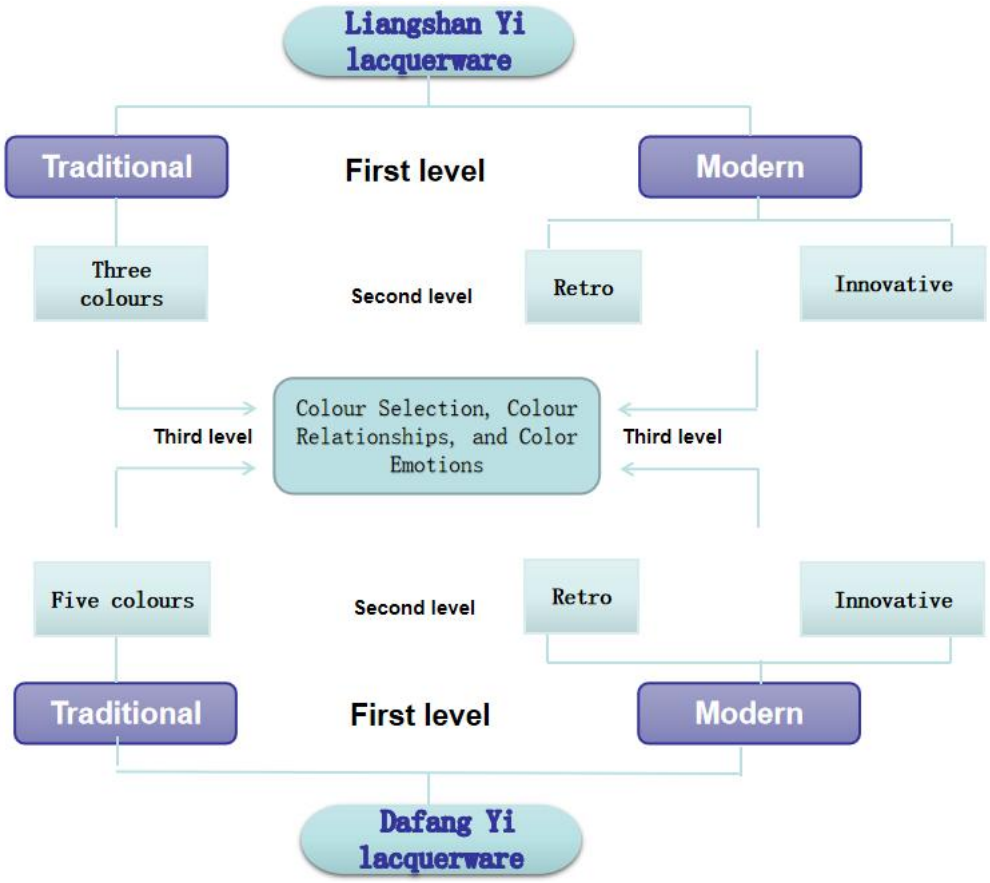


Figure 3.6: Determining Suitable Samples 3
Source: Researcher's Illustration

When using the judgement sampling method, it is important to be aware of the negative effects brought about, i.e. Does not permit generalisation and relies on subjectivity (Taherdoost, 2016). Therefore, the researcher takes the situation of the number of Yi lacquerware types in the two regions as the basis, and the types with a large number of survivals or production are chosen to have more samples and cover a wider range of

areas, while the ones with a small number are deleted as appropriate, and the ones that do not have visual information to be referred to are not included as samples for the time being, to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Lacquerware types without visual information or without collected visual information include traditional and modern types. For example, in the Dafang area, there are records in the literature of lacquer furniture types, tea boats for tea sets, hatboxes and trousseau boxes for storage, and lacquer toys, etc. Although the written records can be found in the literature, due to the long time, the preservation and records of physical and visual materials are incomplete, and there is no reproduction nowadays, and there is no specific visual information visible. In the same area, no visual material has been collected for artefacts produced in the 1950s and 1960s, such as the various animal replica boxes. These were not included in this visual sample.

It should also be noted that as the sample information record sheet is mainly classified by ware type, moulding， ornamentation and colour have not been included in a detailed and comprehensive manner and will be added to in Chapter 4 on the comparative study of moulding，ornamentation and colour.

The selected Yi lacquerware visual sample information has been summarised in a chart, which is provided in Appendix A.

3.6.3 Interviews

Face-to-face and online interviews were conducted to facilitate in-depth communication with individuals associated with Yi lacquerware, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of their views, experiences, and feelings. This study adopts semi-structured interviews with questions identified in advance and open-ended questions

to reveal participants' experiences in the process of learning or making Yi lacquerware. Research experts, inheritors, designers, and related practitioners were selected through a targeted sampling process based on their relevance to the research objectives.

The interview design was carefully planned and executed to ensure consistency and depth across all interviews. The selection of participants was guided by the research objectives, with efforts to include diverse perspectives relevant to each specific objective.

To ensure the representativeness of the sample, the selection of interviewees in this study focused on several key aspects: Experts and influential practitioners with high standing in the Yi lacquerware field were chosen to provide in-depth and authoritative insights. To obtain a comprehensive perspective, the study also included traditional artisans, contemporary designers, and cultural scholars from diverse backgrounds to ensure a range of viewpoints. Additionally, interviews covered key regions such as Liangshan and Dafang, and considered both historical and modern perspectives. This geographical and temporal coverage ensures that the study reflects the evolution and development of Yi lacquerware across different contexts. This integrated approach guarantees the breadth and depth of the interview data, providing robust and representative empirical support for the research.

i. Interviewee Selection: Participants were selected based on their expertise, influence, and involvement in the Yi lacquerware industry. The selection process involved identifying key figures in the field, including artisans, artists, designers, and cultural experts, who could provide comprehensive insights into the artistic characteristics, cultural significance, and modern applications of Yi lacquerware.

In completing the first research objective, we selected artisans, artists and related professionals engaged in the production of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan and Dafang regions as the interviewees. They shared insights about the history, techniques, artistic characteristics and development trends of local Yi lacquerware to reveal the differences in the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions. Through in-depth interviews, we developed a comprehensive understanding of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions.

In completing the second research objective, we conducted interviews with local experts in literature and history, Yi lacquerware inheritors, lacquerware industry operators and other relevant experts to gain a deeper understanding of the deep-rooted differences between Liangshan and Dafang regions in terms of geography, society and culture. The content included factors such as geographic characteristics, forms of community settlement, social and cultural backgrounds, religious influences and customs. Through these interviews, we analysed and explained the deep-rooted reasons for the differences in the characteristics of lacquerware between the two regions.

In completing the third research objective, we chose artists and designers who had influential and representative cases in the field of modern Yi lacquerware design and other art design fields as interview subjects. They shared their experiences and strategies on how to integrate the characteristics of traditional Yi lacquerware into modern art design. Through these interviews, we understood the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design and explored the innovative ideas therein.

ii. Interview Design and Questioning: Interviews were structured around core themes related to the research objectives, but with flexibility to adapt based on

the interviewee's responses. This allowed for deeper exploration of relevant topics. Each interview was tailored to the specific background of the participant, ensuring that the questions were both relevant and conducive to eliciting detailed responses. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for thematic analysis.

Table 3.2： Design of Interview Question Themes

Thematic design of interview questions
Topic 1. The historical development and cultural significance of Yi lacquerware:
a. What is the information about the historical development and evolution of Yi lacquerware?
b. What is the role of local Yi lacquerware in Yi culture?
Topic 2. The relationship between the craftsmanship and artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware:
a. What are the special crafts and techniques used in the production of Yi lacquerware?
b. What are the artistic characteristics of these crafts and techniques?
Topic 3. Information on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware performance and connotation:
a. Among the artistic characteristics of local Yi lacquerware, what are the representative moulding, ornamentation and colour characteristics?
b. How are these artistic characteristics related to the Yi culture as well as to national customs?
Topic 4. Relevance of Yi Lacquerware to Modern Art and Design:
a. What are the potential applications of Yi lacquerware in modern art design? Can it effectively promote the development of Yi lacquerware itself?
b. What are the possible challenges and opportunities in applying the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware to modern art design?

Table 3.2 continued

Topic 5. Conservation and Inheritance of Yi Lacquerware:
a. What are the dilemmas faced by Yi lacquerware art in the process of preservation and inheritance?
b. What are the best practices in preserving and passing on the Yi lacquerware art?
Topic 6. Your personal experience and views:
a. What is your personal professional experience and background in the field of Yi lacquerware?
b. Based on your observations and experiences, what are your expectations and suggestions for the future development of Yi lacquerware?

With the above interview themes being the backbone design, it is important to emphasise that not all themes apply to every interview participant. In the subsequent study, we will selectively choose suitable interview participants for the three different research objectives and ask more detailed thematic questions.

iii. Data Recording and Analysis: All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the participants, ensuring accurate data capture. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim for analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key themes and patterns in the responses. These findings were then compared and contrasted with data from literature research and field observations to enhance the robustness of the study's conclusions.

iv. Integration of Interview Findings: The results from the interviews were synthesized and integrated into the research framework. This integration involved comparing the interview findings with other data sources, such as literature research and field observations, to validate and contextualize the

study's results. The insights gained from the interviews played a crucial role in addressing the research objectives, particularly in understanding the artistic characteristics, cultural significance, and modern applications of Yi lacquerware.

The layered interview design helps to ensure that we gain a comprehensive understanding of the three research objectives and lays a solid foundation for subsequent academic analyses. This selective interview strategy is not only more accurate but also helps to highlight the multifaceted characteristics of Yi lacquerware and its establishment of practical application strategies in modern art design.

3.7 Data Analysis Methods

To effectively address the research objectives, this study outlines a comprehensive methodology that integrates multiple data sources and employs various data analysis methods, including descriptive analysis, thematic analysis, comparative study, case study, and interpretation. Data integration will be achieved by systematically combining interview data with findings from literature research, field observations, and descriptive analysis. This approach ensures a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the artistic characteristics and cultural background of Yi lacquerware. Cross-validation of the data will be used to verify and enhance the reliability of the research findings, ensuring the validity of the study’s conclusions.

3.7.1 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis focuses on systematically recording and interpreting the artistic characteristics and cultural background of Yi lacquerware. According to Siedlecki

(2020), the goal of descriptive analysis is to describe by studying the nature of individuals, events or conditions. It is concerned with the portrayal of independent characteristics or the articulation of existential problems, as well as differences in characteristics or practices between things. A qualitative descriptive approach is employed to gather comprehensive information on the form, materials, and techniques of Yi lacquerware. The specific steps include:

i. Data collection: Systematically observe and record the characteristics of Yi lacquerware artefacts and their cultural context. The researcher uses structured observation guides to ensure that key features, such as form, materials, and decorative techniques, are consistently recorded across different artefacts. These guides are based on established concepts of artistic characteristics from previous research on Yi lacquerware, ensuring the comprehensiveness and consistency of the methodology.

ii. Data categorisation: Organise the collected data into categories such as form, materials, and techniques. Instead of using a coding system, the researcher employs qualitative methods to categorise and describe the observed features. This approach allows for a more flexible and in-depth exploration of the data, capturing the diversity and richness of the lacquerware. The system of categorisation is designed to facilitate comparison and thematic analysis in subsequent stages of the research, enabling the researcher to identify patterns and unique characteristics without relying on quantitative coding structures.

iii. Descriptive reporting: Provide a detailed report on the categorised data, offering clear and comprehensive thematic descriptions. The reporting process

emphasises qualitative analysis, focusing on in-depth interpretations of various artistic features rather than using descriptive statistics to summarise their distribution. This approach aims to present a systematic analysis of the unique characteristics of lacquerware, enhancing the depth and accuracy of the research findings.

The rationale for choosing descriptive analysis lies in its ability to offer a structured and systematic method for recording and interpreting the distinctive features of Yi lacquerware. By using structured observation guides, the researcher ensures that the data collected is comprehensive and consistent, facilitating subsequent comparison and thematic analysis. The descriptive reporting method relies on in-depth subjective interpretation, highlighting the diversity and complexity of the data, thereby making the research findings more credible and aligned with the research objectives.

3.7.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis can help researchers identify and describe important themes in the data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), and identify and explain the themes and meanings in the texts, images and other materials related to Yi lacquerware through in-depth analysis. The thematic analysis process includes:

i. Familiarisation with the data: Engaging with the data through repeated reading, observation, and analysis to identify emerging patterns and themes. This step allows the researcher to immerse themselves in the data, gaining a deep understanding of its nuances and potential significance.

ii. Theme identification: Grouping the data into key themes that reflect significant aspects of Yi lacquerware, such as its artistic features or the socio-cultural factors that influence its formation. The focus here is on breaking down the complexity of the data into meaningful themes for analysis, while ensuring that the themes remain closely tied to the cultural context.

iii. Theme interpretation:Interpreting the identified themes to uncover deeper meanings and insights related to the cultural and historical context of Yi lacquerware. Comparative techniques are applied where necessary to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the themes relate to the broader Yi cultural environment. This interpretive approach ensures that the analysis reflects the context while offering insightful perspectives.

This method ensures a qualitative depth in understanding Yi lacquerware by uncovering thematic relationships within the data. By focusing on detailed interpretation and thematic exploration, the method aligns with the research objectives and provides a rich, contextually informed analysis.

3.7.3 Comparative study

The comparative study method systematically compares different aspects of Yi lacquerware across various regions, periods, and types. According to Esser and Vliegenthart (2017), a comparative study begins by clarifying the purpose of comparison as a crucial component of the research. This involves placing the object of comparison within a consistent comparative dimension, which means that the method deepens understanding by comparing the structures and practices of the studied society with those of other societies. The comparative study process includes:

i. Case Selection Criteria: Cases are selected based on their representativeness and relevance to the research objectives. Selection criteria include geographic regions (e.g., Liangshan, Dafang), historical periods (e.g., traditional and modern Yi lacquerware), and specific types or forms of lacquerware. These criteria ensure that the cases encompass a wide range of artistic characteristics and cultural backgrounds, providing a solid foundation for comparative research.

ii. Establishing Comparative Dimensions: Comparative dimensions are established to guide the analysis. These dimensions may include form, materials, techniques, cultural symbolism, and socio-economic factors. By establishing clear dimensions, the research ensures that the comparative analysis remains focused and relevant. The selection of specific comparative dimensions is based on their significance to the research objectives, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of how different factors influence Yi lacquerware.

iii. Data Comparative Analysis Methods: Qualitative comparative methods are used to systematically compare the data across different cases. The data is organised and interpreted based on the established comparative dimensions. Descriptive analysis and thematic interpretation are applied to highlight the similarities and differences between the selected cases. This method ensures a structured and meaningful comparison, allowing for a deeper understanding of the variations in Yi lacquerware across different contexts without relying on coding systems.

The comparative study method provides an in-depth understanding of the diversity and evolution of Yi lacquerware by analysing how different factors influence its artistic characteristics in various contexts. This approach offers a deeper understanding of both differences and commonalities, providing cross-cultural and cross-temporal perspectives.

3.7.4 Case study

The case study method involves an in-depth investigation of Yi lacquerware and its application in modern art design. As noted by Flyvbjerg (2011), case studies focus on detailed, careful, and comprehensive analysis of individual instances. This method emphasises:

i. Case Selection and Definition: Cases are selected based on their uniqueness, relevance to the research questions, and potential to provide in-depth qualitative insights. The selection process involves defining the scope of each case, whether focusing on traditional Yi lacquerware or its application in modern art design. Clear criteria are established to ensure that the chosen cases thoroughly reflect the research objectives, encompassing both traditional and modern artistic characteristics and design applications.

ii. Data Collection Methods: Data collection employs various qualitative techniques, including interviews with key stakeholders (such as artisans and designers), field observations, and analysis of relevant visual materials (such as photographs and design prototypes). Each case is approached holistically to ensure that the data collected captures all relevant aspects of the subject matter.

iii. Data Analysis Procedures: Data analysis involves detailed case studies to thoroughly interpret the collected data. Thematic analysis is used to identify key themes and patterns, with cross-case comparisons conducted where applicable to understand the broader implications of the findings. The data is organised and interpreted based on thematic relevance. Additionally, contextual analysis is employed to place Yi lacquerware within its specific cultural, historical, and artistic background, ensuring that the research findings are interpreted within their actual context.

The role of this study is to explore the uniqueness and individual differences through an in-depth study of Yi lacquerware cases and related modern art design cases and to gain an in-depth understanding of the association between Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics and modern art design, as well as the innovative design application methods that have been developed in the process of the association. With specific and detailed data, it provides the researcher with the basis for in-depth understanding and analysis.

3.7.5 Interpretation

The interpretive research method is a dialogical approach that achieves interpretation and understanding by integrating the researcher's perspective with the object of study (Dowling, 2004). This study employs interpretive methods to elucidate and understand the artistic characteristics and cultural background of Yi lacquerware. The interpretation process includes:

i. Integration of Perspectives: Combining insights from various data sources, such as interviews, field observations, and literature reviews, with the researcher's own perspective to form a comprehensive understanding of Yi

lacquerware. This involves synthesising the data to highlight how different aspects of Yi lacquerware contribute to its overall significance and impact.

ii. Contextual Analysis: Placing Yi lacquerware within its specific cultural, historical, and artistic context. This method involves examining the social background and symbolic meanings behind Yi lacquerware, which helps clarify its status and influence in social, cultural, and artistic domains.

iii. Critical Reflection: Engaging in reflective analysis to interpret the significance and implications of the research findings. This includes questioning how the results relate to broader theoretical frameworks and cultural narratives, ensuring that the interpretations are well-grounded and relevant.

By employing a comprehensive range of data analysis methods—descriptive analysis, thematic analysis, comparative study, case study, and interpretation—the research aims to thoroughly explore the artistic characteristics and application strategies of Yi lacquerware. This multi-dimensional approach facilitates an in-depth examination of Yi lacquerware's diversity and richness across various contexts. Each method has been selected for its ability to reveal different facets of Yi lacquerware, from its traditional craftsmanship to its modern applications. By systematically integrating these methods, the study ensures a robust theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding both traditional and contemporary aspects of Yi lacquerware. This approach not only provides valuable insights into its cultural significance but also highlights evolving application strategies, offering a nuanced understanding of its impact and relevance.

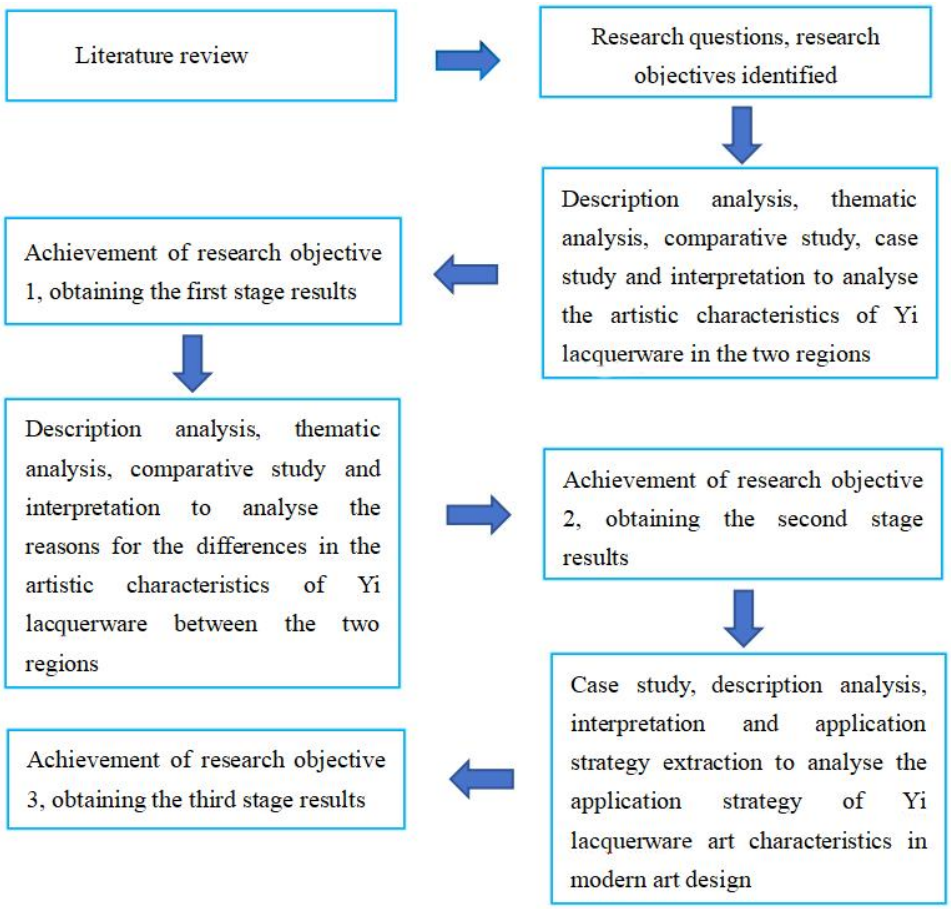


Figure 3.7： Data analysis steps
Source: Researcher's illustration

3.8 Chapter Summary

Qualitative research methodology plays an important role in this study, as Merriam & Tisdell (2015) state that qualitative research is a research methodology concerned with understanding and interpreting social phenomena by collecting non-numerical data to delve deeper into the experiences, meanings, and contexts of the subject of the study. The qualitative research method is used to understand and reveal in depth the differences and commonalities between the characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang regions. The researcher will adopt a field research approach to observe and experience the production process and presentation of Yi lacquerware in the field to obtain

direct and rich data. In addition, the researcher will conduct interviews and have in-depth exchanges with artists and local users to explore their perspectives, experiences, and feelings, and to further understand the value and significance of Yi lacquerware among local people. During the data collection process, the researcher will also conduct literature research to synthesise and analyse existing academic research and literature to understand the history, development and relevant background knowledge of Yi lacquerware art. In addition, the researcher will conduct a case study to select representative Yi lacquerware innovation cases and modern art design cases for in-depth analysis to explore the application methods and strategies of Yi lacquerware characteristics in modern art design.

In the process of data analysis, the researcher will use a combination of Iconography, Order Sense Analysis, Formal Analysis and qualitative research methods. Through the method of Iconography, the researcher can analyse the moulding, ornamentation and colour of Yi lacquerware to reveal its visual effect and artistic expression. The Order Sense Analysis can help us understand the organisational structure, proportionality and Order Sense in Yi lacquerware and its association with society and culture. Formal Analysis focuses on the formal language, structure and use of materials of Yi lacquerware, and explores its artistic expression and craftsmanship.

By combining these research methods, the researcher will collect, collate and analyse a wealth of data to reveal, from a comprehensive and in-depth perspective, the similarities and differences between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions and their causes, and provide strategies for their application in modern art design, to further promote the innovation and development of Yi lacquerware art in contemporary society.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse and discuss in detail the findings of the comparative study of the characteristics of the Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang. In the previous chapters, the researcher has already conducted a literature review on the history of Yi lacquerware development, production techniques, expressions of artistic characteristics and their cultural backgrounds in Liangshan and Dafang. Now, we will focus on presenting the valuable data and findings obtained from field research, literature research and expert interviews.

Firstly, the researcher will conduct a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, including their mouldings, ornamentation and colours. It will reveal the specific differences in the performance of artistic characteristics of lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang regions, and explore the findings about the diversified artistic styles of Yi lacquerware itself.

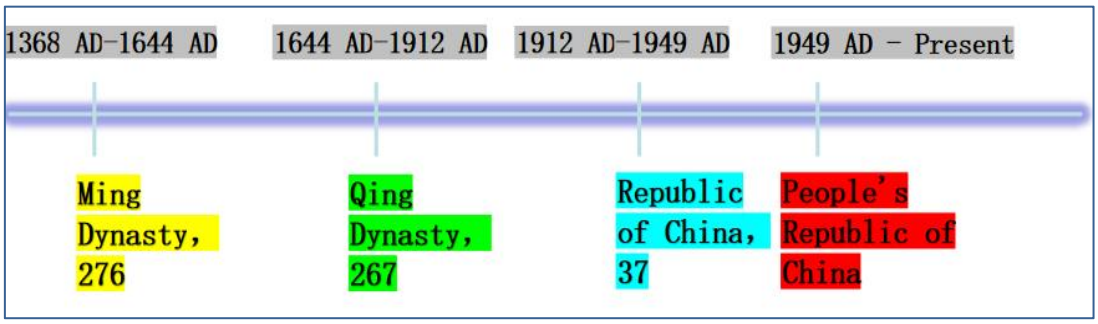
Subsequently, the underlying reasons for these differences will be examined, with a focus on the influence of environmental factors, ethnic groups, culture and religion, customs, and aesthetics. This analysis aims to uncover the root causes of the variations in lacquerware art between Liangshan and Dafang.

Finally, the researcher will explore strategies for applying Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics in modern art design. This process will be based on interviews and case studies to analyse how to integrate traditional elements with modern art design, and

how to use the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware to create design works with modern aesthetics.

Since the two places have deep historical roots and the timeline is too long, the Ming and Qing Dynasties to the present day are chosen as the comparative timeline in this study to explore the above research questions more clearly.

Table 4.1： The Research Time Frame of this Thesis



Through the results, findings and discussions presented in this chapter, the aim is to offer a comprehensive and in-depth comparative study of the Yi lacquerware of Liangshan and Dafang, as well as to explore strategies for its application in modern art design, ensuring its sustainable development.

4.2 Data Analysis of Artistic Characteristics of Yi Lacquerware

The artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware are compared and contrasted between Liangshan and Dafang, in both traditional and modern periods. Analysing the similarities and differences in specific mouldings, ornamentation and colours, can help people to understand more deeply the production process, use and functional characteristics of Yi lacquerware in different regions and periods.

This study employs the descriptive analysis method from Iconology, categorising the moulding, ornamentation, and colours of Yi lacquerware based on visual characteristics. In the moulding analysis section, 69 representative lacquerware pieces were selected; in the ornamentation analysis section, 30 representative lacquerware pieces and 78 individual pattern units were chosen; in the colour analysis section, 25 representative lacquerware pieces were selected. The analysis is conducted across three dimensions—moulding, ornamentation, and colour—allowing for comparative analysis of both traditional and modern designs. These samples were collected and identified through literature records, museum collections, and fieldwork in regions known for Yi lacquerware production, ensuring both the representativeness and relevance of the samples. The analysis employs qualitative methods, integrating stylistic analysis and thematic analysis from Iconography, along with Order Sense Analysis and Formal Analysis theory. Through comparative analysis, the differences in artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware between the Liangshan and Dafang regions have been identified.

4.2.1 Analysis of Moulding

The moulding of Yi lacquerware embodies a rich blend of craft traditions, functional design, and profound cultural significance. By comparing the similarities and differences between the traditional and modern lacquerware mouldings of Liangshan and Dafang regions, this section provides a detailed description of their morphological characteristics and an in-depth analysis of their cultural meanings. By descriptively comparing 69 representative lacquerware pieces, and integrating stylistic analysis and thematic analysis from Iconography, as well as Order Sense Analysis and Formal Analysis

theory, the differences and similarities in the moulding of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan and Dafang regions will be identified.

4.2.1.1 Moulding Classification

i. Traditional Moulding of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

Tableware and Wine Utensils (Regular Moulding): In traditional lacquerware from Liangshan, tableware and wine utensils are the most common items, characterized by geometric regularity, primarily used in daily dining contexts. This category includes one piece each of Lacquer Food Pot, High-base Lacquer Helmet, Low-base Lacquer Pot, High-base Lacquer Pot, Flat Belly Lacquer Wine Pot, and Lacquer Pot with Ball-shaped Belly (see Appendix A.1).

Tableware and Wine Utensils (Irregular Moulding): This type features more freeform moulding, reflecting different functionalities, with some vessels being restricted to use by specific social classes. One piece each of single-ear bowls, boat-shaped wine bowls, a pair of connected lacquer wine cups, and Wood Spoon are selected (see Appendix A.1).

Biomorphic Animal-Shaped Utensils: These items are inspired by animal skins, horns, and claws, forming unique biomorphic moulding, often restricted by hierarchy. This category includes two Lacquer Leather Bowls, a Bird-shaped Eagle Claw Lacquer Wine Pot, Black Wild Boar Foot Wine Container, Wine Ox Horn, Lacquer Wine Ram Horn, and Eagle Claw Wine Cup (see Appendix A.1).

Daily Life Utensils: This category includes a variety of objects such as storage jars and musical instruments, with diverse moulding suited for various daily and cultural

entertainment contexts. This type includes one piece each of Lacquer Wood Container, Circular Lacquer Dining Table, Wooden Cigarette Case, Mouth String, Lacquer Saddle, and two pieces of Lacquer Moon Lute (see Appendix A.1).

Weapons: The moulding of weapon lacquerware focuses on items like Lacquer Quiver, protective gear, and gunpowder barrels, combining practicality with decorative elements. This category includes one piece each of Lacquer Leather Armour, Leather Shield, Lacquer Quiver, and Ox-horn-shaped Powder Flask (see Appendix A.1).

Instruments for Bimo's Rituals: The instruments used in religious ceremonies exhibit unique and varied moulding specifically designed for rituals. This category includes one piece each of Bimo’s Divination Tube, Bimo's Ritual Fan, and Bimo's Ritual Horn (see Appendix A.1).

ii. Traditional Moulding of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Tableware and Tea Utensils: The tableware from the Dafang region share a traditional form with those from the Liangshan region and will not be included here; instead, types with visual characteristics and functional differences have been selected. This category includes a set of Gourd-shaped Leather Lacquerware (see Appendix A.2).

Daily Life Utensils: The primary type of daily life utensils in Dafang is storage utensils, which are both functional and varied in moulding, commonly featuring geometric and biomorphic forms. This category includes one piece each of a Lacquer Wood Container, a Pumpkin Shape Lacquer Box, a Fan-shaped Lacquer Box, a Lacquered Leather Tea Caddy, a Lacquered Wooden Tray, and a Goose-shaped Lacquer Storage Box (see Appendix A.2).

Decorative Items (Vases, Screens, etc.): Decorative lacquerware moulding from Dafang, especially vases and screens, are unique and exhibit strong artistic and decorative qualities, reflecting the diversified styles of lacquerware craftsmanship in the region. This category includes one piece each of Six-Sided Lacquer Vase, Hand-painted Lacquer Vase, Leather-Covered Gourd with Gilt Decoration, and Lacquered Folding Screen (see Appendix A.2).

Others: Due to the visual samples of weapons and instruments for Bimo's conjuration being consistent with those from Liangshan, further analysis is not repeated (see Appendix A.2).

iii. Modern Moulding of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

Transformation and Reorganization of Traditional Forms: Modern Liangshan lacquerware continues and transforms traditional forms, resulting in new moulding, often innovating upon traditional crafts for everyday items like tableware. This category includes a set of Lacquer Wine Set and one piece of Lacquered High-Footed Plate (see Appendix A.3).

Imitating Forms from Other Product Areas: With modern craftsmanship, Liangshan lacquerware begins to imitate moulding from non-traditional lacquer products, such as some cultural and home decor items, resulting in diverse forms. This category includes three pieces of Hand-painted Lacquer Vase, Hand-painted Lacquer Display Plate, Round Lacquered Storage Box, Square Lacquered Storage Box, Lacquer Ashtray, and one piece of Hand-painted Lacquered Round Side Table(see Appendix A.3).

Innovation in Biomorphic Animal Moulding: Biomorphic animal shapes have received new developments in modern lacquerware, with items such as ox head decorations and sheep head ornaments showcasing new forms. This category includes one piece each of Hand-painted Lacquer Sheep Head Ornament and Hand-painted Lacquered Ox-Head Bracket Set (see Appendix A.3).

iv. Modern Moulding of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Innovative Daily Utensils: Modern Dafang lacquerware features innovations in daily utensils with diverse and functional moulding, including creatively designed wine sets, tea sets, and storage utensils. This category includes a set of Immortal Wine Set, a set of Side-handle teapot, teacups, and tea tray, Tasting Wine Pot, Lacquered Heart-shaped Jewelry Box with Leather Base, and one piece of Lacquered Drum-shaped Box (see Appendix A.4).

Interpretation of Retro Styles: Modern Dafang lacquerware returns to furniture design, primarily in complete dining tables and stools that maintain both practicality and traditional decorative beauty. This category includes a set of Hand-painted Lacquered Dining Table and Chair Set and two pieces of Lacquered Bangle (see Appendix A.4).

Replicated and Imitated Products: Modern Dafang lacquerware replicates non-lacquer items such as phone cases and business card holders. While these moulding are relatively simple and lack unique styles, they still demonstrate the diversified applications of lacquer craftsmanship. However, due to their lack of representative qualities, further moulding analysis has not been conducted.

4.2.1.2 Moulding Description

The moulding design of Yi lacquerware reflects strong regional and temporal characteristics in both appearance and function. This section focuses on a detailed description of the basic features of these mouldings, ranging from simple geometric forms to more complex designs, demonstrating the diversity of lacquerware forms. By documenting and summarising these visual characteristics, this section lays a clear foundation for the subsequent analysis of shapes, enabling a closer connection between form, function, and cultural context.

i. Traditional Moulding of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The traditional Yi lacquerware tableware and wine utensils from the Liangshan region prioritise functionality as their primary design requirement. The common shapes are an approximate compositional form: there are minimalist lines characterised by curves. The shape is a regular symmetrical moulding with a rounded belly. The distinctive proportional feature is the high foot, which means that the top and bottom parts of the moulding are close in height. In terms of spatial combination, the structure is not complicated, and through the woodturning, these shapes can be mass-produced from wood, typically used for making bowls, plates, wine pots, and other everyday utensils (Jiwu, Interview).

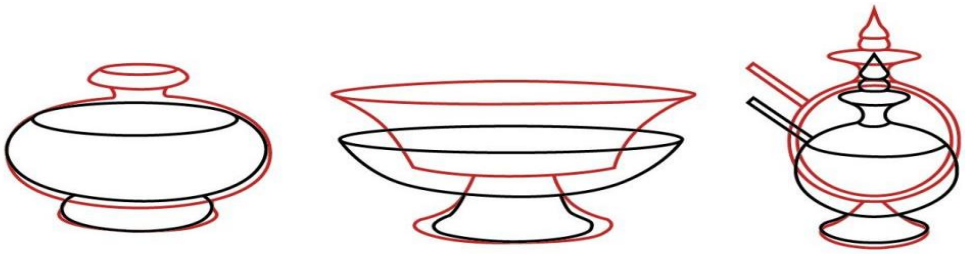


Figure 4.1: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Tableware and Wine Sets Shapes 1
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are some special non-regular mouldings, such as single-ear bowls, boat-shaped wine bowls, pairs of wine cups, and wood spoons, which are mainly due to changes in their shape and proportions, and are often made by adding other structures to the rounded shape or making deformations based on the rounded shape, and do not have the characteristics of a tall foot.

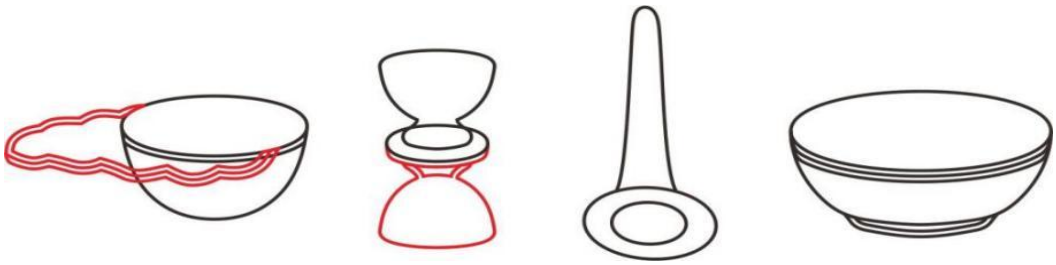


Figure 4.2: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Tableware and Wine Sets Shapes 2
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The next is the artefacts generated by imitation of biomorphic forms and parts of the skin, horns and claws of animals. The line features of these mouldings are organically shaped, with more variations, and the shapes and proportions are the same as those of the bionic objects, so the spatial structure of these wares is more complex. The biomimetic type is the complete animal form of imitation reproduction, realism is higher, but at present,

there is historical and graphic information are bird-shaped wooden wine pots, such as pigeons, turtledove and magpie shapes, and the outlines of the same. There are also two types of mouldings made from animal skins, horns, and claws; cow and horse hides have good ductility, thickness, and toughness, and the whole skin is usually used with a mould to make the body, as in the case of the lacquer-skinned bowls, which are round or oval, with open mouths and flat bottoms, and which meet the requirements for bowls.



Figure 4.3: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Tableware and Wine Sets Shapes 3
Source: Researcher's Illustration

While cow and sheep horns, as well as pig hooves, were kept intact and used as drinking vessels or specific storage containers, eagle's claw was used to combine with wooden moulds to produce functional wares.

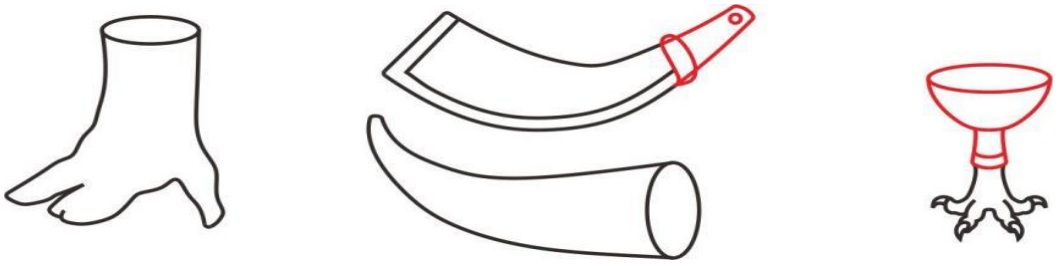


Figure 4.4: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Tableware and Wine Sets Shapes 4
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are two types of utensils related to daily life. One is the symmetrical moulding, which is still simple and curvilinear, with a few straight lines, and the most common moulding is the rounded shape, which has the longest body part, no high feet, and a simple spatial composition. For example, the storage box, which is also made using woodturning techniques, is generally in the moulding of a long round belly with, a flat bottom, suitable for holding objects. A large size is usually for storing grain and food, small size can be used as a needle and thread box, etc., some have a lid. There is also a typical Yi musical instrument Moon Lute with a long neck and a rounded belly, which is round and symmetrical. There are also variants on this basis, that is, the octagonal Moon Lute, but round is the most common. There is also a long, slender cylindrical moulding made of bamboo, a needle and thread cylinder and a Yi musical instrument, the Mouth String, except that the former is a closed container and the latter is an unclosed ware. There are also dining tables, with short feet and shallow round plates, for placing objects (usually tableware) in use. The other type is non-regular apparatus, such as wooden saddles and bridle covers, the lines of which are a combination of straight lines and curves, and the shapes and proportions are close to those of the common saddles, but one of the typical mouldings resembles the mouth of a fish in its overall shape, which is called the fish mouth saddle, and the spatial composition of the saddle is more complicated due to the combination of several parts and the need to fit the mounting.

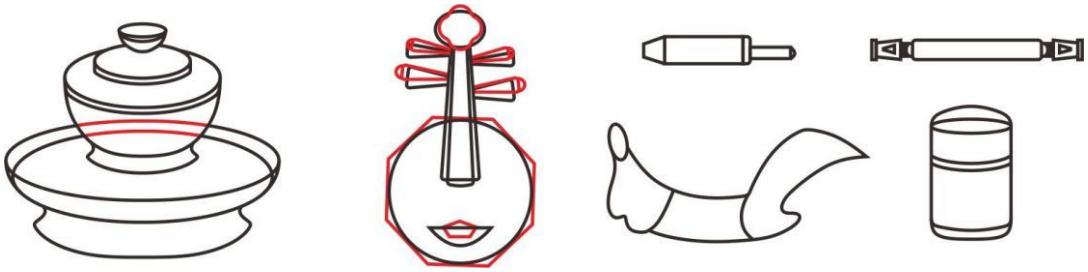


Figure 4.5: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Utensils for Daily Life Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Protective gears for weapons are mainly made of cowhide, such as leather armour for weapons, leather wrist guards, leather shields, etc. The lines are a combination of straight and curved lines, the mouldings and proportions have to fit specific human body parts, and the spatial composition is also more complex because of the combination of multiple parts and the need to fit the wearer. For example, leather armour should be divided into front and back pieces to cover the entire upper body area, including the chest and back. At the same time, it is suitable for wearing, and easy to move, so not the whole piece, but more than ten pieces of leather armour combination form. Leather shields are among the simplest types of weapons, typically made from a single piece of cowhide. The overall shape is almost perfectly circular, with a slight convex outer surface and concave inner surface, though the curvature is minimal. Holes are drilled at the top, with straps attached for easy handling. Storage devices were made of wood, such as the quiver, a device for storing arrows, and the ox-horn-shaped powder flask, which was modelled on a real ox's horn, combining practical function with unique aesthetics.

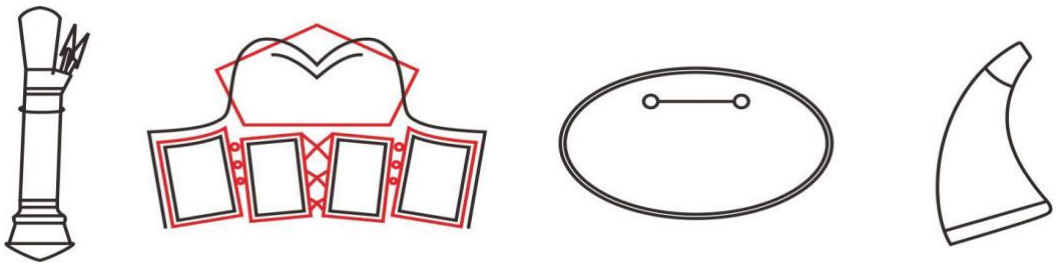


Figure 4.6: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Weapons Shapes

Source: Researcher's Illustration

Finally, there are the implements dedicated to mystical religious ceremonies, namely the instruments for Bimo's rituals. These include the Divination tube, the Ritual fan, and the Ritual horn (there are a few other instruments that are not suitable for display due to cultural taboos). Except for the Ritual horn, which is made directly from the horn of an ox, the Divination tube is a cylindrical bamboo or wooden instrument with a pointed tip in front, and the Ritual fan is a combination of a round bamboo fan and a wooden handle, which is very close to the Han Chinese fan. These mouldings are a combination of curved and straight lines, with a variety of shapes and proportions, and have both simple and complex spatial compositions, but because they are specialised Bimo ceremonial wares, they are very unique in form and specification, and do not appear on Yi lacquerwares that have other uses (Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Museum, 1982).

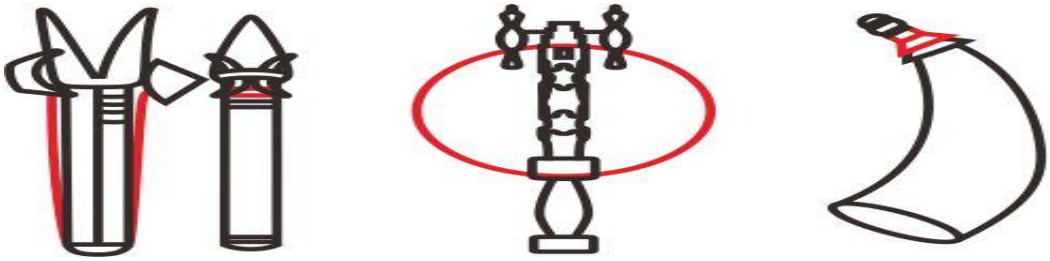


Figure 4.7: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Instruments for Bimo's Conjuration Shapes

Source: Researcher's Illustration

ii. Traditional Moulding of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

The traditional lacquerware in Dafang region is characterized by its distinctive shapes, which combine both practicality and artistic symbolism. The homology of tableware and wine utensils in the Liangshan Yi region is not obvious, because the traditional lacquerware of the Dafang region is very scarce (Xia, Interviews), and there is a lack of visual samples, so the only documented homologues of Liangshan Yi lacquerware are wooden spoons, some wine sets (Flat Belly Lacquer Wine Pot), weapons, and Instruments for Bimo's conjuration (cf. exhibits from the Shexiang Museum). This scarcity makes it unnecessary to repeat descriptions of homologous forms, as the following section will focus on the distinct moulding forms.

A typical representative known form of traditional lacquer tableware from Dafang is the gourd-shaped leather lacquerware gold-painted in the National Palace Museum of China, with bowls, plates, cups, spoons, and tea sets, totalling more than thirty pieces. The lines are curved, the shapes are round, oval and petal-shaped, and the proportions are linked by size to form sets, such as teapots and tea bowls, and eight petal-shaped discs enclosing a large, round, petal-shaped disc, which can form a nine-compartment storage box. The basic shapes of both teapots and teabowls are close to bowls, except that they are open-mouthed and have lids, and the teapots have handles. Both bowls and cups have rounded feet, deep mouths and rounded bellies, with the former being large and the latter small. The spoon has a short oval handle. The most ingenious aspect of this is the spatial relationship, as these pieces not only form a new form of tableware on their own (the petal-shaped box) but also fit perfectly into the gourd-shaped box as a whole.

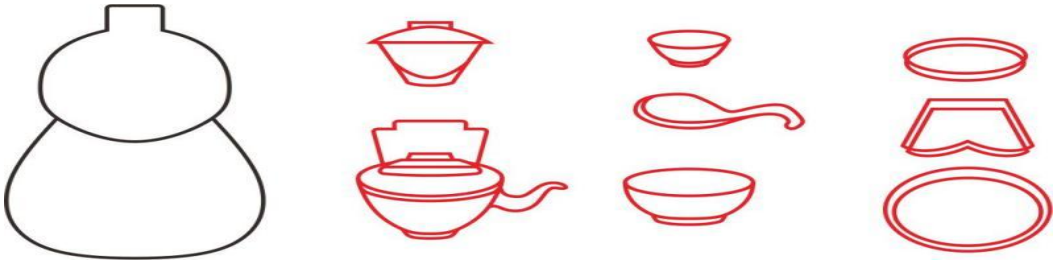


Figure 4.8: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Tableware, Wine Sets and Tea Sets Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Lacquerware forms related to daily life are commonly found in the form of storage tools as utility objects and vases as decorative objects. These mouldings are curved, straight, or a combination of both, and the most common shapes are a variety of regular geometric forms, including squares, circles, and ellipses, as well as bionic shapes. Proportionally, depth of the ware depends on the needs of the function. The spatial composition depends on the appearance of the shape of the moulding and the choice of craft materials to distinguish between simple and complex, for example, the regular geometric form is simpler than the bionic form of the composition of the relationship between the spinning wooden moulding is much simpler than the spatial composition of the stripped moulding relationship. In general, the mouldings of lunch boxes, fruit boxes, sewing boxes, jewellery boxes and clothes boxes, in addition to trays, belong to the regularity. The mouldings of animals, plants and other utensils are imitated, such as melon petal boxes, goose-shaped boxes fan-shaped boxes, etc. The Moon Lute, as a typical instrument of the Yi ethnic, also exists in the Dafang region.

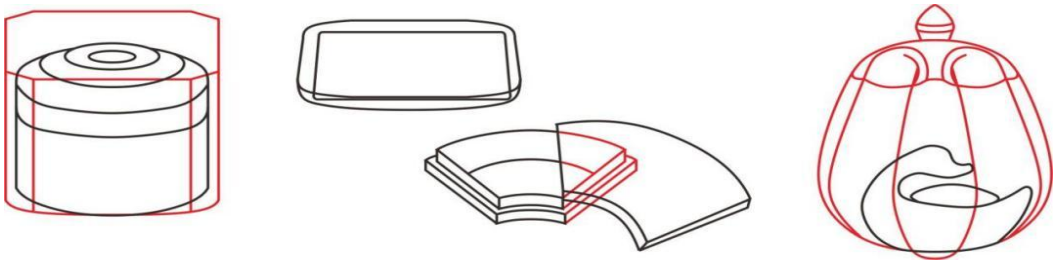


Figure 4.9: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Utensils for Daily Life Shapes 1
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The specific mouldings of vases are very varied, but in general, they are divided into geometric and bionic shapes. The most common form is cylindrical, with variations in the rim, body, and foot, either in terms of the lines that twist and turn or in the proportions of the dimensions. Bionic forms are mostly variations of the melon petal form, and the most common is the gourd form, which is also very characteristic of the Dafang region (Chen, interview). The folding screen typically consists of multiple panels connected by hinges, allowing for easy folding and unfolding. The overall shape of the screen is diverse, with common forms including rectangular and curved shapes.

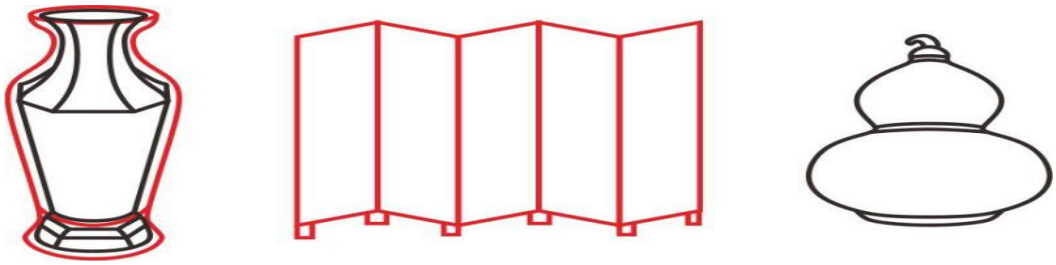


Figure 4.10: Traditional Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Utensils for Daily Life Shapes 2
Source: Researcher's Illustration

iii. Modern Moulding of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

There are two ways to develop modern mouldings in the Liangshan region. The first way is to reorganise and transform the original moulding, usually by complicating or repeating the shape of the outline, mainly by stretching or reducing the proportional relationship. For example, a typical Ball-shaped Belly wine pot is elongated on the original basis, with the same structural form repeatedly superimposed on the taller one, accompanied by several wine cups to form a series of sets. In the case of the high-footed wooden tray, the previous high foot was thickened and reduced in height, increasing the diameter of the upper tray, reducing the depth, and making it open-mouthed to form a tray-like moulding.



Figure 4.11: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Tableware and Wine Sets Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The second way is imitation. The sources are also relatively wide, including imitation of the mouldings of lacquerware from other regions, and imitation or even reproduction of other non-lacquerware products and mouldings. Some of the more common utilitarian wares are table and chair sets, and square and round storage boxes. In addition, the teapot and teacup set, which is not seen in the traditional type, is now also present. Decorative mouldings include vases, plates, and jewellery such as bracelets. These items generally feature symmetrical and regular shapes, with clean lines and balanced

proportions.

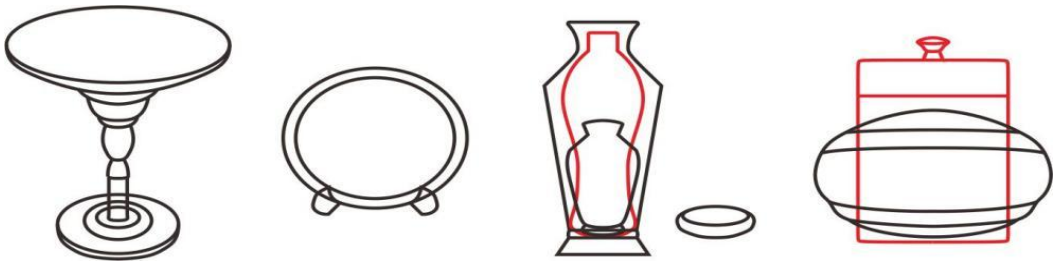


Figure 4.12: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Utensils for Daily Life Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

In addition, there are bionic forms. For example, there is a cow-shaped wine pot, similar to the bird-shaped wine pot, which adopts a realistic style and preserves the typical overall form of a cow. Moreover, the ox-head bracket set, made of wood, is a simplified geometric reproduction of an ox's head and is usually used to decorate the exterior walls of houses in local Yi villages. Goat-head lacquer ornaments, used as home decorations for special occasions, are proportionally accurate reproductions of a goat's skull, featuring detailed carving on the structure and contours.

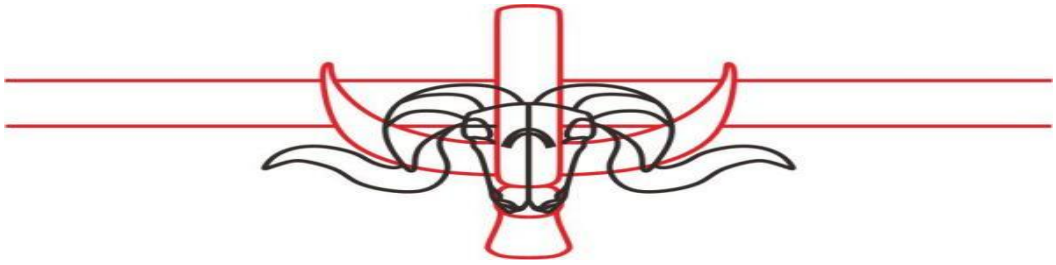


Figure 4.13: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Liangshan - Ox-Head Bracket Set Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

iv. Modern Moulding of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Firstly, modern Dafang lacquerware has undergone bold innovations while preserving the traditional advantages of its moulding forms, rather than simply distorting the shapes. For example, in the category of utilitarian wares, newly created items with regional characteristics, such as the Tasting Wine Pot and the Immortal Wine Set, have primarily innovated in their appearance. The Tasting Wine Pot features a symmetrical design with a high foot and a rounded belly, offering elegant and refined lines. In contrast, the Immortal Wine Set adopts an asymmetrical design, with an overall ovoid shape, blending a unique modern aesthetic with practicality.

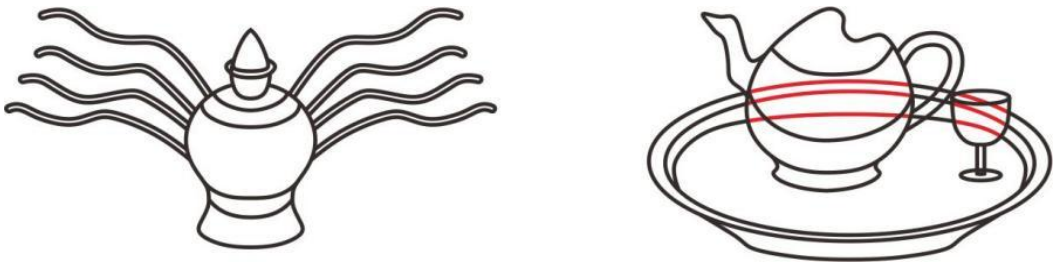


Figure 4.14: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Wine Sets Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The innovative shapes of storage boxes include both drum-shaped and heart-shaped forms, with the former evoking a sense of traditional Chinese style, while the latter aligns more with modern aesthetic expressions. There are also designs that incorporate other materials, such as the teapot in the tea set, which features a lacquered wooden handle combined with a body made of clay or porcelain, creating a new form; additionally, there is a spherical tea caddy resembling a Go Game box, which is equipped with a metal handle; and a tea tray designed in the form of a chessboard and scroll, showcasing a unique artistic flair and practicality.

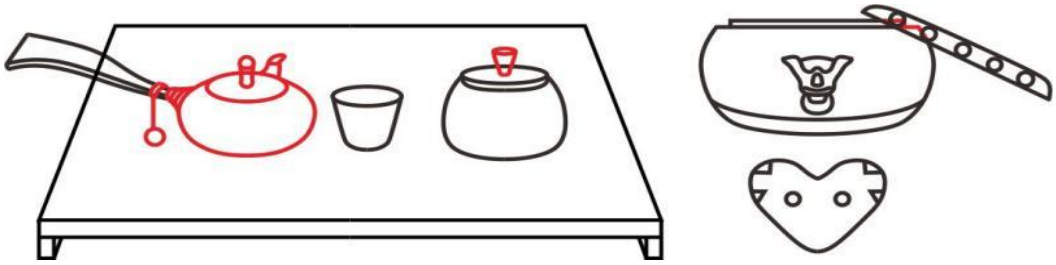


Figure 4.15: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Utensils for Daily Life Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are two types of tables and chairs: the Eight Immortals table and the round table. The Eight Immortals table (square table) was once common in the homes of ordinary people in Dafang. While it retained a traditional structure, it was only treated with a simple lacquer coating for protection, and thus, was not considered part of lacquerware craftsmanship. In contrast, the round table set, which has emerged as a new style in Dafang lacquer furniture, adopts a more retro form, drawing inspiration from the furniture design of the Han and Ming-Qing dynasties. The round table set typically consists of a round table and stools, with the table usually accompanied by ten stools. The overall design presents a harmonious and unified aesthetic. The tabletop is perfectly round with smooth edges, and the four legs feature a curved design that adds a modern touch. The stools resemble the shape of the table but are proportionally smaller. This round table set seamlessly blends a retro design with modern aesthetics, demonstrating the balance and integration of tradition and innovation in Dafang lacquerware.



Figure 4.16: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Furniture Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The vases in the decorative ware category, in addition to the variations of the proportional and column relationship, even have the appearance of asymmetrical mouldings and non-closed mouths, which are very modern in design. Display plates are also a new moulding type, basically round, and the previous literature review stated that there were fan shapes, but the researcher could not be sure because no relevant physical or visual information was found to confirm this. Bracelets are available in wood and leather, with flaky and columnar ring enclosures.



Figure 4.17: Modern Yi Lacquerware from Dafang - Vases and Decorative Ornaments, Cultural and Creative Products Shapes
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Other mouldings of cultural and creative products are also basically imitations and reproductions of existing non-lacquerware artefacts, such as mobile phone cases, business card holders, bookmarks, etc. Although the artefacts are not new, their craftsmanship is still of a good level, so they will not be enumerated. The relevant visual

samples are included in the appendix for reference.

4.2.1.3 Moulding Analysis

The mouldings of Yi traditional lacquerware are closely related to the living customs culture and religion of the people in Liangshan and Dafang, especially the specific modelling structures are usually directly constrained by the materials and craftsmanship used to make the bodies, and also, as Kandinsky (1977) stated that the artistic elements are organically intertwined with the functional factors in the production of various utility items, such as weapons, labour tools and daily utensils. Wölfflin (2012) argues that the formal characteristics of a work of art are the key to understanding its period, style and cultural context, while the constituent elements such as line, shape, proportion, plane and space are the basic elements for analysing a work of art.

i. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Mouldings

The design demand for traditional lacquerware in the Liangshan region is firstly to make it functional to satisfy the basic life, that is to say, whether the utensils for daily life can have reasonable usability. Therefore, tableware and wine utensils have the most variety of mouldings (Jiwu, interview). The tableware and wine utensils are primarily characterized by their circular raised bases, which can be attributed to two main reasons. Firstly, the processing methods for lacquerware materials mainly involve wood, with rhododendron wood being the preferred choice. The Yi people mastered the woodturning techniques early on, making the production of circular shapes more convenient. Secondly, this design is related to the traditional custom of the Yi people of sitting in circles on the ground for meals and drinking. Researchers observed through historical footage at the

Liangshan Slave Museum that ordinary Yi families typically sit on the ground to eat, using circular raised tableware to serve food, which helps to prevent contamination and facilitates access. During field research, the researcher was invited to a harvest celebration in a rural area of Xide County, where it was noted that when many people gather, they still sit in circles on the ground for meals, with food served directly on the ground, although traditional lacquerware is noticeably less common now. Additionally, in the Yi drinking custom, participants share the same wine pot and bowl, drinking directly from the bowl while using a straw with the pot, a social practice that enhances group cohesion.

As for irregularly moulding tableware, this is also influenced by the processing methods of lacquerware materials. For instance, the single-ear bowl and boat-shaped wine bowl were originally made from cowhide. Due to differences in craftsmanship and materials, these mouldings do not achieve the perfect symmetry seen in lathe-turned wooden structures, resulting in unique stylistic features. Although many single-ear bowls and boat-shaped bowls have now been made from wood, they still retain their original mouldings. The biomorphic design of wine pots and cups stems from the Yi people's reverence for nature, particularly the eagle, which is reflected in the eagle-claw cup, originating from the admiration of eagles by the Liangshan Yi people. Such unique materials and styles mean that these types of tableware are typically used only among the ruling class and aristocracy, highlighting the strict class distinctions within Yi society and the pursuit of material and cultural identity. Of course, these mouldings not only satisfy basic life needs but also elevate themselves to levels of military, political, cultural, cultic, and aesthetic significance. Furthermore, these wares are often restricted to certain classes and contexts.

The types of utensils for daily life are diverse, encompassing storage containers, musical instruments, and horse gear, with their mouldings not only reflecting practical functions but also cultural and aesthetic values. Firstly, most symmetrical forms are derived from woodturning techniques, closely related to the properties of the materials and the craftsmanship involved. Symmetrical mouldings, such as round storage boxes and the moon lute, embody the ideals of harmony and balance in Yi culture. The circular shape symbolises completeness and unity, aligning with the Yi people's understanding of nature and the universe. Secondly, the functionality of these utensils is balanced with aesthetics. The rounded design of storage containers not only meets practical needs but also exhibits an elegant dynamism through its streamlined contour. The moulding of the moon lute is based on the physical attributes required for playing; its streamlined design meets the physical demands of sound propagation while symbolising reverence for the moon, reflecting the Yi people's connection to nature and the cosmos (Jiwu, interview). This design not only underscores the close relationship between shape and function but also highlights the importance of utensils as carriers of cultural identity. In contrast, irregular utensils, such as the fish-mouth saddle, combine straight and curved lines, demonstrating the Yi artisans' flexible understanding of ergonomics while also reflecting the close relationship between the Yi people and their natural environment. The complexity of these mouldings is not merely a practical consideration but also a manifestation of cultural narrative, showcasing the profound significance of Yi traditional craftsmanship.

In Yi culture, the protective gear for weapons is closely linked to their mouldings, materials, and functions, demonstrating a combination of practicality and aesthetics. Yi protective equipment for weapons is primarily made from cowhide, such as leather armour, wrist guards, and shields. These types of gear align well with the

ergonomic theories of modern design, as they have been created and refined through the long-term practice of warfare, symbolising a respect for life and a pursuit of the art of combat. Furthermore, these utensils provide not only physical protection in battle but also carry symbolic significance of identity and honour in cultural rituals (Li, interview). These materials are not only durable but also provide necessary protection during combat. The toughness and flexibility of cowhide enable the gear to effectively withstand impact while allowing for freedom of movement. The interconnected structure of the leather armour forms a flexible protective system that meets the need for protection without restricting the wearer's mobility. This multi-piece design reflects considerations of ergonomics, ensuring the gear conforms to various body shapes. In comparison to leather armour, the leather shield is a relatively simple protective item; however, its slight curvature helps to disperse impact during combat. Storage devices, such as quivers and ox-horn-shaped powder flasks, showcase alternative design shapes; the elongated form of the quiver facilitates the storage and retrieval of arrows. The shape of the ox-horn powder flask mimics that of a real ox's horn, merging practical functionality with unique aesthetics. This biomimetic design not only enhances its visual appeal but also aligns with the Yi people's reverence for nature.

In Yi traditional culture, implements dedicated to mystical religious ceremonies, such as the divination tube, ritual fan, and ritual horn, exhibit unique the implements dedicated to mystical religious ceremonies, mouldings and functions. The forms of these implements combine straight and curved lines, featuring both simple outlines and complex spatial compositions. However, as these items are specialised Bimo ritual tools, their mouldings and specifications are subject to strict limitations and cannot be modified arbitrarily. This restriction renders them particularly unique within Yi lacquerware, as similar designs do not appear on non-religious lacquerware. Such taboos reflect the Yi

people's emphasis on religious faith and respect for tradition, simultaneously fostering a distinct cultural identity within society. The Bimo religion symbolically embodies the mystery and continuity of religious forms through the unique mouldings of its ritual implements, serving as a crucial vessel for cultural identity among the Yi people. Although this content may not be the primary focus of subsequent research, it still illustrates the complexity and richness of the culture presented through Yi lacquerware.

Apart from the elements that share common origins with the traditional lacquerware forms of Liangshan, the traditional lacquerware forms of Dafang region more prominently reflect the fusion of functional design and aesthetic expression. This fusion is shaped by the interaction of craftsmanship, material characteristics, and cultural symbolism.

Firstly, the uniqueness of Dafang lacquerware forms lies in the combination of practicality and symbolic significance. For example, the gourd-shaped leather lacquerware storage box is formed by nesting various functional dining and drinking vessels, and when integrated with the gourd-shaped container, it showcases this dual functionality. It not only serves a practical purpose but also carries the symbolic meaning of prosperity and good fortune.

Secondly, the geometric and biomorphic forms in Dafang lacquerware highlight the flexible use of materials and craftsmanship. Whether it is the round, square, or oval geometric shapes, which demonstrate precision and practicality in design, or the biomorphic forms such as the melon-seed shaped box and goose-shaped container, which exhibit a creative imitation of natural forms, all are derived from the unique stripping technique. These forms are also closely related to the selection of materials such as cowhide and fabric. This adaptability reflects the creativity of artisans when dealing with

complex structural designs, ensuring structural integrity while fulfilling aesthetic demands. Additionally, the spatial composition of Dafang lacquerware reveals a meticulous sense of proportion and balance. The distinction between simple geometric shapes and more complex biomorphic forms highlights layered craftsmanship techniques. The turning wood craft results in symmetrical and simple designs, while the stripping technique produces more complex spatial structures, indicating that the complexity of the design is hierarchically based on the item's use and cultural significance.

At the same time, the presence of multifunctional designs, such as folding screens and modular boxes, demonstrates a high level of attention to space-saving and adaptability. These designs not only meet practical needs but also enrich the aesthetic experience through diverse forms and structures.

Finally, the popularity of certain forms, such as various vases and storage boxes, reflects the fusion of functionality, artistic tradition, and regional cultural identity, making them exemplary intersections of culture and design.

By comparing the traditional lacquerware forms of Liangshan and Dafang regions, it becomes evident that the two regions share both commonalities and differences in their form characteristics. The commonality lies in the fact that both regions' lacquerware convey functionality and cultural symbols, reflecting the unity of practicality and symbolism in Yi culture. However, the differences reflect distinct social and cultural characteristics: in Liangshan, lacquerware emphasises communal and social functions, whereas Dafang focuses more on formal innovation and technical refinement, demonstrating a higher pursuit of material culture and artistic expression. This indicates

that lacquerware forms are not only a reflection of functional needs and craftsmanship but also vivid representations of cultural values and regional identities.

ii. Analysis of the Evolution of Modern Mouldings

The evolution of modern lacquerware forms in Liangshan mainly develops through two paths: the re-creation of traditional shapes and the imitation of external elements, reflecting the region's deep reliance on traditional culture and its active absorption and integration of foreign design concepts. These two development paths not only represent a re-examination of traditional craftsmanship but also respond to the modern society’s needs and aesthetic trends.

First, the re-creation path in Liangshan tends to create new forms based on traditional designs by extending proportions, repeating shapes, and refining structures. This innovative approach does not completely abandon traditional forms but preserves the core elements of traditional shapes while extending and altering the details to align with modern aesthetic demands. By stretching, enlarging, reducing, or superimposing traditional forms, designers can create new objects that have a modern feel yet retain traditional charm. For instance, traditional round wine vessels are transformed by increasing their height, expanding proportions, or repeating the same structure to generate new visual effects, which preserve the symbolic meaning of traditional forms while adding modern dynamism.

Another innovation path is the imitation of the styles of lacquerware or non-lacquerware forms from other regions, thus expanding the diversity of forms. With the development of society and increased cultural exchanges, Liangshan lacquerware has been influenced not only by local traditional culture but also by external design styles. This

external influence is reflected in the diversification of forms, innovation in structure, and functional expansion. For example, the introduction of household items such as tables, chairs, and storage boxes, although not part of traditional Yi lacquerware, has broken through in terms of both form and function. These new forms often exhibit symmetrical and well-structured shapes, which meet modern society's demand for symmetrical beauty and functional design. Additionally, decorative items like vases and bracelets also reflect the impact of external design concepts on Liangshan lacquerware. These forms focus more on structure and visual balance, catering to modern preferences for refined, symmetrical, and simple designs.

Moreover, modern lacquerware forms in Liangshan have also featured biomorphic designs. For example, animal-shaped wine vessels such as cow-shaped wine pots and bird-shaped drinking vessels represent a unique expression in modern lacquerware. These biomorphic forms not only possess strong artistic impact visually but also connect with traditional culture in terms of functionality and symbolism. By creatively imitating natural forms, these pieces combine tradition and modernity, nature and art, expanding the expressive space of lacquerware art.

In general, the evolution of modern lacquerware forms in Liangshan reflects the organic integration of tradition and modernity, internal culture and external influences. Through the combined action of these two paths, Liangshan lacquerware not only retains the essence of Yi culture but also responds to modern society’s diverse demands for aesthetics, functionality, and cultural expression. This evolution process not only demonstrates the artistic value of Liangshan lacquerware but also reflects the transformation of lacquerware as a regional cultural symbol in the changing times.

In comparison with Liangshan, the modern lacquerware form evolution in Dafang emphasizes bold innovation on the basis of traditional forms while stressing the organic integration of functionality and aesthetics. This evolution not only reflects Dafang's in-depth exploration of lacquerware craftsmanship but also responds to modern society's comprehensive needs for practicality, aesthetics, and cultural heritage. The lacquerware forms in Dafang are more diversified, with practical items particularly focusing on the unification of functionality and aesthetics. The traditional limitations of form have been broken, and the shapes now go beyond the original traditional patterns, adjusting proportions, extending forms, and reassembling structures to better align with modern aesthetic trends and practical needs. For example, the new storage box designs maintain traditional forms while incorporating multifunctional designs that are more in line with modern lifestyles, offering both utility and unique artistic expression.

Additionally, the modern evolution of forms in Dafang fully integrates contemporary aesthetic elements, borrowing from modern design languages and concepts. This makes the forms not only meet modern demands for simplicity, streamlined shapes, and innovation but also place greater emphasis on details and the perfection of craftsmanship. Regarding materials, Dafang lacquerware has incorporated more modern materials, such as wood, ceramics, metal, and leather, on top of traditional lacquer craftsmanship, resulting in lacquerware forms with more layered and diverse visual effects, overcoming the limitations of traditional single-material designs.

At the same time, the functional categorization of forms has been greatly expanded in modern times. From traditional items like tableware and drinking vessels to contemporary tea sets, storage containers, and home decorations, the functionality of

lacquerware has expanded significantly. This expansion has not only made lacquerware more practical in everyday life but also endowed it with multiple meanings and values in terms of cultural symbolism and aesthetic expression. For example, modern lacquerware tea sets and dining ware focus more on convenience and usability, while their designs incorporate elements of modern simplicity, retro, and innovation, creating art pieces with a sense of the times.

In summary, the evolution of modern lacquerware forms in Dafang combines traditional craftsmanship with modern design concepts, showcasing the innovation and transformation of lacquerware craftsmanship in the context of the new era. This evolution is not only a continuation and promotion of traditional techniques but also an active response to modern aesthetic needs and lifestyles, marking a comprehensive enhancement of Dafang lacquerware's artistic, cultural, and practical value. By comparing the modern lacquerware forms of Liangshan and Dafang, we can observe both the similarities and differences in functionality, form innovation, and aesthetic expression between the two regions:

The commonality lies in both Liangshan and Dafang lacquerware emphasizing the unity of functionality and cultural symbolism. Both regions retain the essential features of traditional forms and innovate them to meet modern societal needs. In these innovations, the transmission of culture and symbolic meaning is consistently preserved, whether in the functional design of the forms or in their decorative expression, the core symbols of traditional Yi lacquerware culture are maintained.

The differences lie in the fact that modern lacquerware in Liangshan focuses more on inheriting and re-creating traditional forms, extending and repeating shapes to

preserve the original appearance of traditional forms, while also imitating external design elements. In contrast, Dafang places more emphasis on functional innovation and aesthetic expression on the basis of tradition. Dafang's designs are more modern and diverse, demonstrating greater artistic expression and functional breakthroughs. These differences not only reflect the different design philosophies of the two regions but also highlight the uniqueness of their regional cultures: Liangshan's forms emphasize social functionality and the transmission of cultural symbols, while Dafang focuses more on the combination of practicality and artistic innovation.

4.2.2 Analysis of Ornamentation

Yi lacquerware, especially from the Liangshan region, is very recognisable (Jiwu, interview). This is because ornamentation is the largest visual element in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, with a large number and rich variations, and has a very typical national and regional style. In Yi lacquerware, ornamentation often becomes the key visual information to differentiate from other ethnic lacquerware with the most basic form and compositional relationship, not to mention that they usually have corresponding symbolic semantics and convey ethnic aesthetic styles outwardly. Wolfring (2012) points out that the most basic forms and compositions in artworks often reflect the spiritual characteristics of their different eras. Through the comparative analysis of ornamentation forms and compositional relationships, we can perceive the differences in ornamentation styles of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, which also reflects the pluralistic expression of Yi culture.

By descriptively comparing 30 representative lacquerware pieces and 78 individual pattern units were chosen, and integrating stylistic analysis and thematic

analysis from Iconography, as well as Order Sense Analysis and Formal Analysis theory, the differences and similarities in the ornamentation of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan and Dafang regions will be identified.

4.2.2.1 Ornamentation Classification

As far as the known visual samples are concerned (see Appendix A), the ornamental motifs of the ornamentation in both regions are derived from natural, plants, animals and things related to life. Moreover, in terms of style, it is divided into abstract geometric style and representational realistic style (where the representational realistic style includes decorative style and painting style). However, according to the literature, it is known that the Yi lacquerware in the Dafang region has undergone a long period of evolution and development since the Ming and Qing dynasties, and now there are not many lacquerware ornamentation presented in the same form in the two regions.

i. Traditional Ornamentation of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

Natural Motifs: Natural motifs mainly represent natural landscapes, including mountains and rivers, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Plant Motifs: Plant motifs mainly represent herbaceous plants, both wild and cultivated.

Animal Motifs: Animal motifs, except for the complete reproduction of the dragon totem, all other animal shapes are partial instead of the whole.

Life-Related Motifs: The things related to life motifs are mainly based on the tools of life and production.

Modelling Elements and Compositional Forms: The modelling elements, dots, lines and surfaces, constitute the unit pattern, independent pattern and continuous pattern

respectively, and the three are interchangeable. Among them, the number and variety of unit patterns are the most important. The independent and continuous patterns combined are based on linear modelling, including straight lines and curves, and of course, there is also a combination of points, lines and surfaces (Xing, 2015).

ii. Traditional Ornamentation of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

The traditional ornamental motifs of the Dafang region are primarily derived from natural ecology and everyday life, but their formal expression is more intricate. The pattern modelling tends to be representational, with less abstraction, and the symbolic meanings are more intuitive and easier to understand.

Natural Themes: These motifs are dominated by landscape imagery, which includes mountains, rivers, and other natural scenery.

Plant Themes: Plant motifs are represented through decorative linear floral and tree patterns, as well as representational paintings of flowers. These include both Gongbi (detailed, realistic) and Xieyi (generalised, freehand) styles of flower and bird paintings.

Animal Themes: According to Lan (1992), the common animal motifs in traditional ornamentation include rare birds and beasts, which are often framed by intricate zigzag lines. These lines include curved, rotating valleys, cornucopia, floral motifs, parallel stripes, and overlapping clouds, algae, and vines. Plant and animal motifs are often combined to convey beautiful symbolic meanings.

Life-Related Themes: Life-related motifs are generally drawn from customs and often include textual elements. They often serve as auspicious symbols of a good life.

These motifs carry multiple meanings, with diversified modelling forms even under the same symbolic meaning.

Modelling Elements: The primary modelling elements include lines and surfaces, with fewer dots. These elements form unit patterns, standalone patterns, suitable patterns, and continuous patterns. Among these, the standalone and suitable patterns are the most varied in number and form (Xia, interview).

iii. Modern Ornamentation of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The classification of modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation in the Liangshan region largely inherits the basic categorisation system of traditional ornamentation, but with new expansions and innovations in both content and form. The specific classifications are as follows:

Natural Motifs: Natural motifs in modern ornamentation not only preserve traditional elements such as mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, and stars, but also introduce new proportions and structural adjustments to convey a stronger sense of modernity.

Plant Motifs: Modern plant motifs build upon traditional herbaceous plant patterns and further incorporate floral designs from other art forms, as well as expressive and stylized plant elements with a more artistic approach.

Animal Motifs: Compared to traditional motifs, modern animal motifs are more diverse. For example, complete animal shapes, especially dynamic forms of birds and beasts, are more widely used, incorporating modern artistic styles and symbolic meanings.

Life-Related Motifs: Life-related motifs in modern ornamentation have expanded beyond traditional life tools to include modern life scenarios. This includes

decorative patterns of contemporary objects, clothing, and human figures, reflecting not only the practicality of everyday life but also the integration of cultural heritage and modern aesthetics.

Figurative Motifs: Figurative motifs are a significant breakthrough in modern ornamentation. Human figure motifs, for example, have become an important category. These motifs go beyond traditional symbolic representations and emphasize greater detail and decorative elements, often blending flat decorative styles with vibrant expressions, capturing distinct characteristics of the contemporary era.

Modelling Elements and Compositional Forms: The modelling elements in modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation still rely on points, lines, and surfaces as the fundamental components. However, the combinations of these elements have become more diverse. The interplay of unit patterns, independent patterns, and continuous patterns is more flexible, allowing for greater innovation and the creation of new visual expressions. This flexibility infuses the overall style with a stronger sense of modernity.

iv. Modern Ornamentation of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

The classification of modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation in the Dafang region mainly reflects the inheritance and innovation of traditional motifs. The specific categories are as follows:

Natural Motifs: The natural motifs in modern Dafang Yi lacquerware continue the traditional decorative content, while also introducing simplified and modernised design forms, giving them a contemporary aesthetic.

Plant Motifs: Modern plant motifs build upon traditional herbaceous plant patterns, incorporating additional floral elements and expressive, free-style plant designs, which enrich the artistic layers and decorative qualities of the pieces.

Animal Motifs: Compared to traditional designs, modern Dafang animal motifs are more diverse. These animal images often break free from the traditional symbolic constraints, presenting a more modern, artistic representation.

Life-Related Motifs: The scope of modern life-related motifs has expanded from traditional tools and daily utensils to scenes from contemporary life, including modern everyday items, clothing patterns, and depictions of human figures.

Textual Motifs: Textual motifs are an innovation in modern Dafang Yi lacquerware, where symbolic forms of characters are used as decorative patterns. These break away from the limitations of traditional symbols, demonstrating a fusion of text and art. These textual motifs not only carry symbolic meanings but also create unique visual effects through their form and arrangement.

Texture Motifs: Texture motifs are primarily achieved through unique lacquering techniques, resulting in distinctive visual textures that add depth and visual interest to the pieces.

Modelling Elements and Compositional Forms: The modelling elements in modern Dafang Yi lacquerware still rely on points, lines, and surfaces as their basic components. However, the ways these elements are combined show greater innovation. The combinations of unit patterns, independent patterns, and continuous patterns are more flexible, with linear forms and geometric compositions being widely employed.

Additionally, the fusion of traditional elements with modern artistic techniques infuses the works with a richer visual layer, adding more modernity and artistic impact.

4.2.2.2 Ornamentation Description

i. Traditional Ornamentation of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The unit forms of traditional lacquerware patterns from Liangshan are richly diverse, primarily derived from depictions of natural ecology, plant and animal, as well as objects associated with daily life and production, each carrying a unique symbolic significance, as shown in the figure below.

Natural-themed patterns commonly include celestial motifs such as the sun, moon, and stars, as well as geographical motifs like mountains and rivers. These designs simplify the contours of natural forms into geometric shapes, creating a unique sense of abstract beauty. They vividly reflect the Yi people's humble worldview and their reverence for nature. Such patterns symbolise the cycles and harmony of the universe and the natural world, and they are widely applied to practical utensils, weapons, and decorative items, embodying cultural continuity and the expression of spiritual beliefs.

Plant-themed patterns are based on the depiction and transformation of flowers, plants, and crops, often featuring interlacing curves that convey a dynamic and intricate aesthetic. These patterns can serve as primary motifs or be used as auxiliary designs on various objects. Rooted in the Yi people's observation and interaction with nature, they artistically express aspirations for prosperity, abundance, and happiness. Frequently appearing on items such as drinking vessels, everyday utensils, and decorative objects,

plant patterns offer a rich variety of combinations, forming an essential visual language in the design of artefacts.

Animal-themed patterns encompass both realistic motifs, such as dragon designs, and geometric interpretations of original forms, such as depictions of animal eyes and horns. Realistic motifs like dragon patterns often derive from the Yi people's ancient totemic worship, symbolising power and protection. In contrast, geometric animal motifs enhance decorative appeal through abstraction, creating striking visual effects. These patterns hold diverse symbolic meanings: for instance, comb motifs signify exorcism and ritualistic purposes, horn motifs are imbued with auspicious connotations, and they collectively reflect the Yi people's respect for nature and their spiritual devotion. Therefore, these patterns appear most frequently in the decorative applications of traditional Yi lacquerware (Jiwu, interview).

Patterns related to daily life typically draw from objects commonly encountered in the Yi people's production and everyday practices, such as tools and household items. Their designs simplify real-life forms into stylised and decorative representations. These patterns, with their symbolic foundations, encapsulate the Yi people's wisdom and cultural heritage. For example, fire striker motifs signify reverence for fire, spearhead motifs embody martial spirit and hero worship, and copper coin motifs serve as auspicious symbols of a prosperous life. These designs are not only used on everyday items but also function as cultural expressions, highlighting the richness of Yi culture and its societal values.

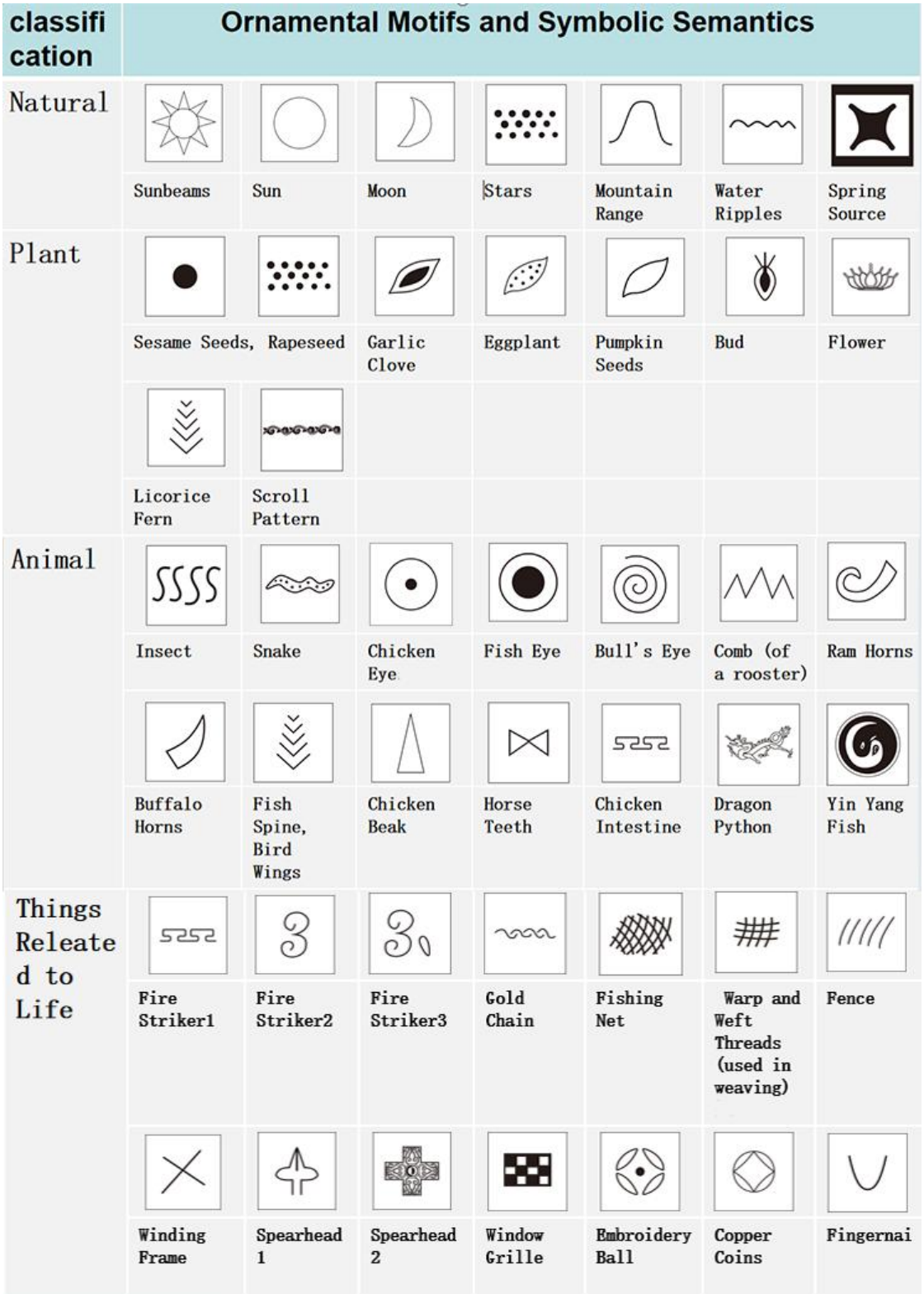


Figure 4.18: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Motifs and Symbolic Semantics Diagram
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Gombrich (2000) states that the Order Sense in decorative art is usually achieved by a combination of factors such as symmetry, repetition, hierarchy and grouping. The organisational scheme of the traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation in the Liangshan region is done in an orderly organisational way, containing symmetry, repetition, hierarchy and grouping. The selection of these patterns and combination forms is related to the type and moulding of the ware being decorated (Xing, 2015).

There are two types of symmetrical forms, one is central symmetry and the other is central axis symmetry. In the case of central symmetry, a single unit or individual pattern is often used as the main pattern in the centre, surrounded by single or multiple layers of continuous patterns as secondary patterns. This type of organisation is most common on rounded, flatware types, such as the flat underside of wooden plates and table tops.

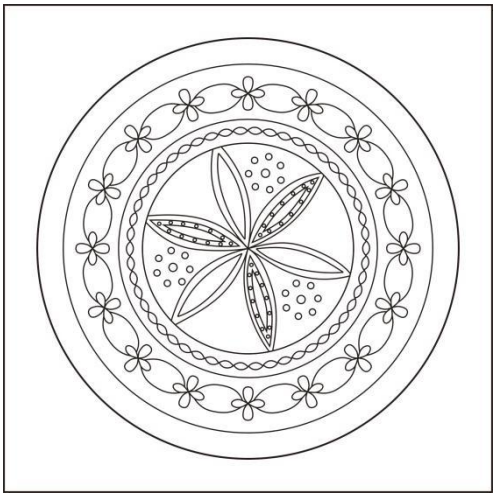


Figure 4.19: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Organization in a Central Symmetrical Form
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Central axis symmetry is the formation of mirror-image symmetry with unitary patterns, both left-right and top-bottom symmetry. It is more common on armour and the outside of tableware.

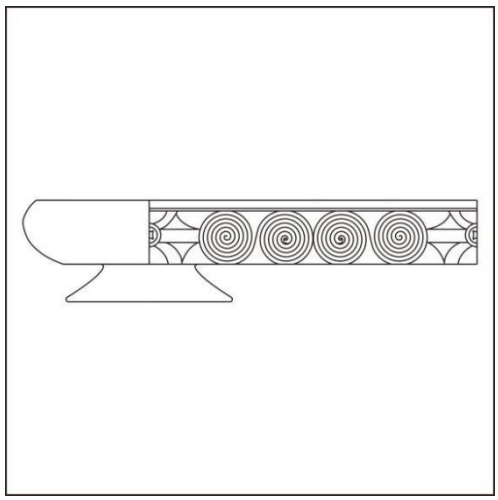


Figure 4.20: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Organization in Central Axis Symmetry
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Repetition is the most popular form of combining unit motifs in traditional Yi lacquerware, and there are many variations of it, through which bipartite (the most common) and quadripartite continuous patterns are formed. Common types include scattered-point repetition, straight-line repetition, diagonal-line repetition, zigzag repetition, wave-line repetition, and composite repetition.

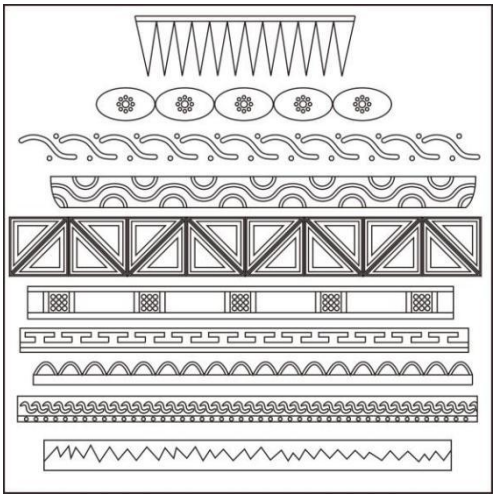


Figure 4.21: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Various Repetitive Organizational Methods
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The hierarchical approach is a method that deals with the layout arrangement of multiple patterns on a moulding.

The first is a complex ornamentation of bipartite continuous patterns arranged in longitudinal bands, culminating in the formation of a face, with no distinction between primary and secondary patterns, and is commonly found on cylindrical and rounded-bellied mouldings.

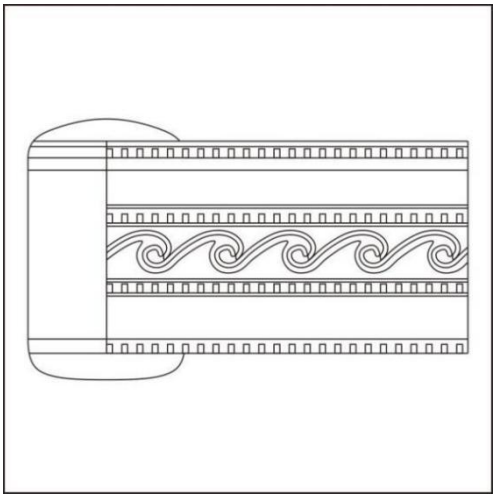


Figure 4.22: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Striated Hierarchical Arrangement
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The second type has a distinction between primary and secondary patterns, forming a hierarchical change in which the primary patterns are surrounded by secondary patterns, and is commonly found on the inner and outer walls of leather and wooden bowls.

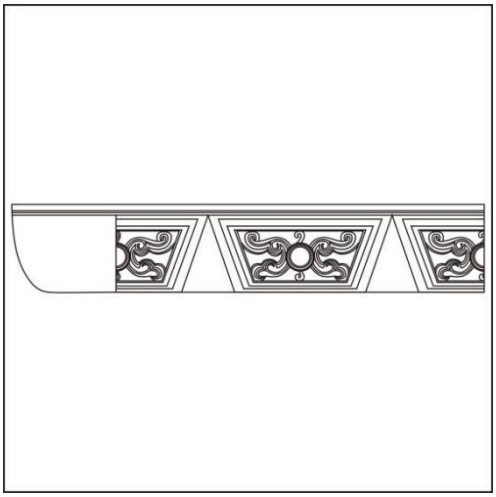


Figure 4.23: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - the Primary Pattern is Surrounded by Secondary Patterns in a Hierarchical Organizational Manner
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are also two types of combinations, one of which is the recombination of unit-shaped motifs into new patterns. Unlike the previous repetitive method, in addition to changes in the layout and direction of the unit-shaped motifs, the symbolic meaning of the motifs will also change. For example, the four-petal patterns are formed by adjusting the direction of the unit motifs from the pumpkin seed motif, and the symbolism is converted from the pumpkin seed motif to the flower petal pattern. It is often used on tableware and wine sets.

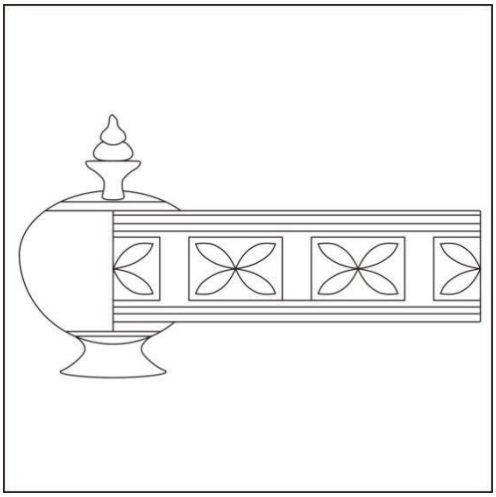


Figure 4.24: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Recomposition of the Same Unit-shaped Patterns
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The second type is the reconfiguration of multiple semantic unit patterns to form a new, more complex pattern, with a semantic overlay that conveys a richer semantic meaning. The figure below is a typical example of a combined pattern of mountains, rivers and streams, where the unit-shaped patterns of mountains and rivers are repeated and combined, but the symbolic meaning remains unchanged, and the semantic meaning of the combined pattern is added to the content. It is commonly used as the main image on tableware.

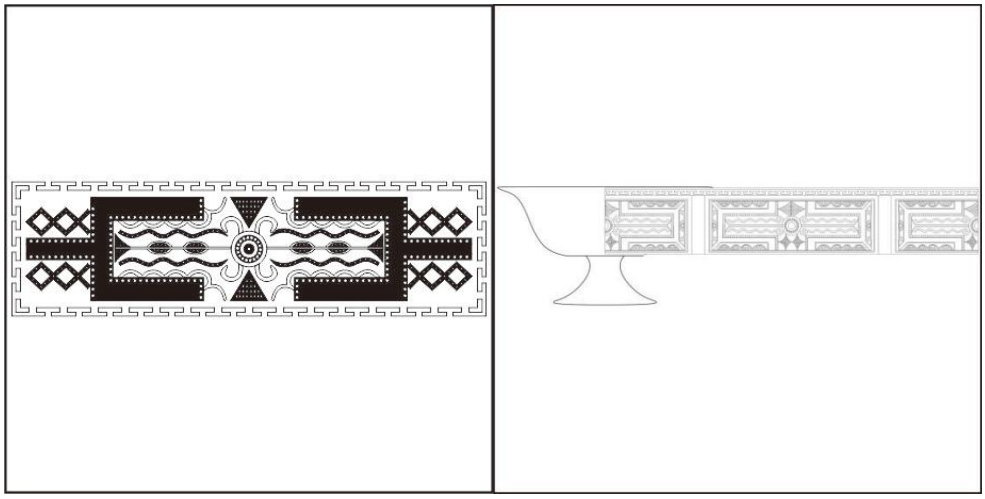


Figure 4.25: Liangshan Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Reconfiguration Method of Different Unit-shaped Patterns
Source: Researcher's Illustration

ii. Traditional Ornamentation of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

The unit forms of traditional Yi lacquerware patterns from Dafang are carefully curated to avoid overlapping with the visual samples of Liangshan's traditional lacquerware patterns. Instead, the researcher focus on visual elements unique to the region. The designs draw inspiration from natural ecology, flora and fauna, and aspects of daily life and production, exhibiting a rich variety of forms and profound symbolic meanings. These patterns embody a distinctive blend of local cultural characteristics, as shown in the figure below.

Natural-themed patterns typically include cloud motifs, fire motifs, and geographical motifs such as mountains and rivers. Some of these patterns simplify natural forms into geometric lines and shapes, creating a strong sense of decorative beauty, as exemplified by cloud, water, and fire motifs. Others adopt a more realistic style, depicting natural landscapes like mountain motifs. Cloud motifs symbolise harmony in nature,

embodying blessings, auspiciousness, and prosperity. Water motifs reflect traditional Chinese philosophical ideas, symbolising life, continuity, good fortune, and wealth. Fire motifs represent strength, light, vitality, and are closely associated with rituals and exorcism. Mountain motifs convey reverence for nature's vitality and embody the philosophical concept of "ascending to see further." These patterns serve as profound symbols of the integration of nature and culture, frequently appearing on everyday utensils or decorative objects. They are not only an aesthetic expression but also carriers of traditional Chinese cultural and spiritual beliefs, imbuing Dafang lacquerware with distinctive regional characteristics.

Plant-themed patterns take inspiration from flowers and foliage, showcasing a diverse range of expressions. Some are presented in realistic forms, such as chrysanthemum and orchid motifs, faithfully capturing natural shapes. Others abstract plant forms through flowing lines and interwoven compositions, creating a sense of rhythm and layered beauty. These patterns can act as primary decorations or as borders and auxiliary elements, enriching the visual appeal of artefacts and demonstrating strong artistic impact. The symbolic meanings of these patterns are intricate and abundant. For instance, the "Four Gentlemen"—plum blossom, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemum—symbolise qualities celebrated in traditional Chinese culture: resilience, elegance, humility, and integrity. Other examples include the peony, which represents wealth and prosperity; plum blossoms and lotus flowers, which symbolise purity and grace; and pine trees, which stand for endurance and longevity. These patterns often carry positive virtues and blessings, commonly appearing on drinking vessels, dining ware, and ornamental lacquerware, forming a significant component of Dafang's traditional lacquerware decorations.

Animal-themed patterns are primarily realistic, focusing on detailed representation while maintaining a sense of decorative beauty. Common motifs include dragons, phoenixes, birds, bats, and fish. These patterns preserve the spiritual essence of the Yi people's ancestral totem worship while incorporating cultural imagery unique to Dafang. For instance, dragon and phoenix motifs together signify "prosperity and harmony," representing harmonious marriages and a thriving social order. When appearing individually, dragon motifs are regarded as symbols of power and nobility—historically signifying imperial authority and, in modern times, embodying the spirit of the Chinese nation. Phoenix motifs are often associated with women, symbolising virtue, elegance, and happiness. Different bird motifs carry specific symbolic meanings: rooster motifs represent good fortune and warding off evil; golden pheasants signify a promising future; magpies convey happiness, harmony, and love; and crane motifs are symbols of longevity and refinement. Additionally, bat motifs signify blessings, good luck, and prosperity, while fish motifs represent wealth, fertility, vitality, and good fortune. These animal patterns, with their intricate designs and rich symbolic meanings, form an integral part of Dafang's traditional Yi lacquerware patterns.

Patterns associated with daily life in Dafang's traditional Yi lacquerware are epitomised by Fu (blessing) and Shou (longevity) motifs. These designs often combine the core elements of the characters for "Fu" (福) and "Shou" (寿) with geometric and decorative lines, symbolising wishes for happiness and longevity. Fu and Shou motifs are not only decorative but also carry deep cultural sentiment, representing ideals of life and the value of existence. In practical applications, these motifs frequently appear on dining ware, ceremonial vessels, and ornamental objects, particularly on items of commemorative significance (Xia, interview).

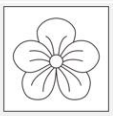
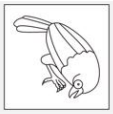
classification	Ornamental Motifs and Symbolic Semantics						
Natural							
	Cloud1	Cloud2	Water Ripples1	Water Ripples2	Mountain Range	Fire	
Plant							
	Orchid	Peony	Plum Blossom	Chrysanthemum1	Chrysanthemum2	Chrysanthemum3	Lotus
							
	Algae Pattern	Scroll Pattern1	Scroll Pattern2	Pine Needles			
Animal							
	Bird Pattern	Rooster	Pheasant	Magpie	Crane	Dragon	Phoenix
							
	Butterfly	Bat	Carp				
Things Releated to Life							
	Blessing Character	Longevity Character 1	Longevity Character 2				

Figure 4.26: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Motifs and Symbolic Semantics Diagram
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are two types of organisational schemes for traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation in the Dafang region. One is done according to the orderly organisation, which contains the symmetrical approach, the repetitive approach, the suitable approach and the combination approach. Banding, scattering or other suitable forms of pattern expression are common in the traditional lacquerware forms of Dafang (Lan, 1992).

The symmetry approach is a method in which uniform patterns are arranged in an axisymmetric manner on flat or three-dimensional mouldings, the Moon Lute soundboard and a vase, following a pattern of contrasting responses.

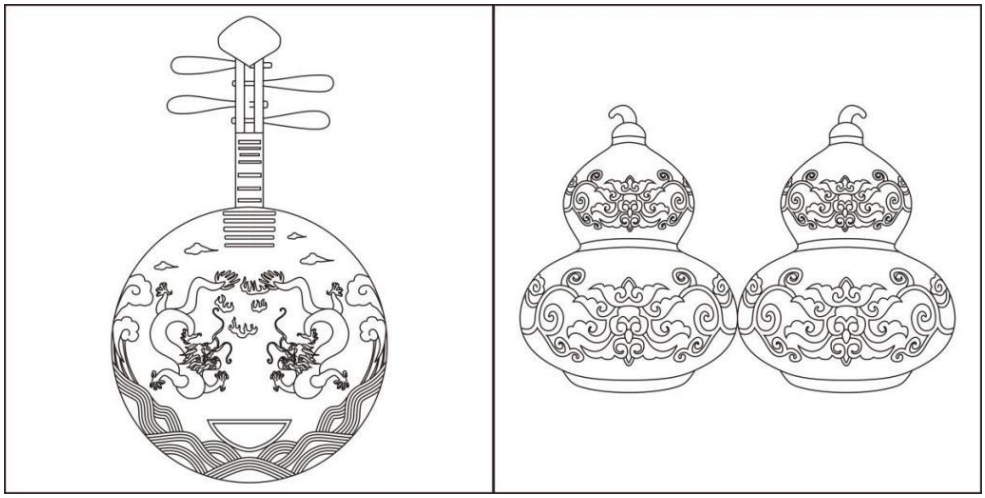


Figure 4.27: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Symmetrical Organizational Method
Source: Researcher's Illustration

There are two types of repetitive approach. The first, similar to that of the Liangshan region, is the development of a unitary motif into a continuous pattern of bipartite and quadripartite patterns, which are often used as marginal ornamentation.

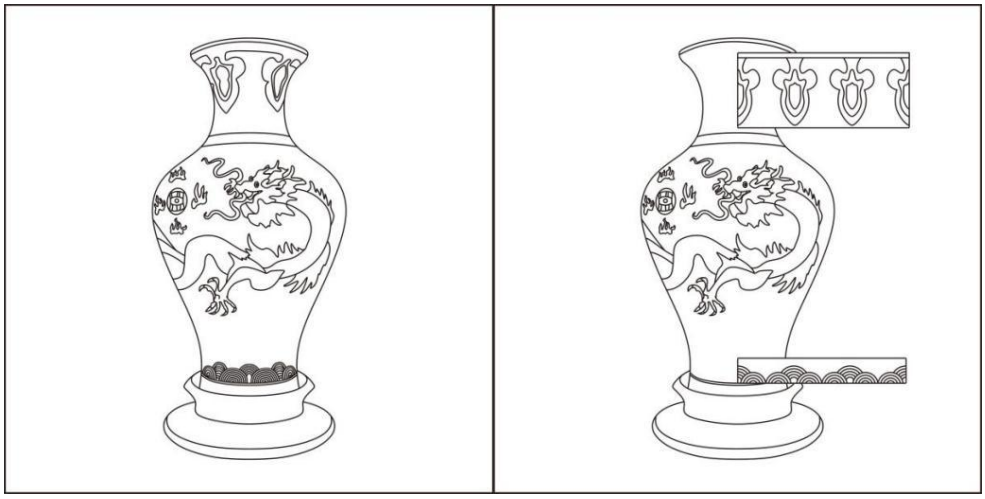


Figure 4.28: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Bilateral Continuous Organizational Method
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The second is the repetitive arrangement of unit-shaped motifs following natural organic forms to form representational images, such as the leaves on a pine tree.

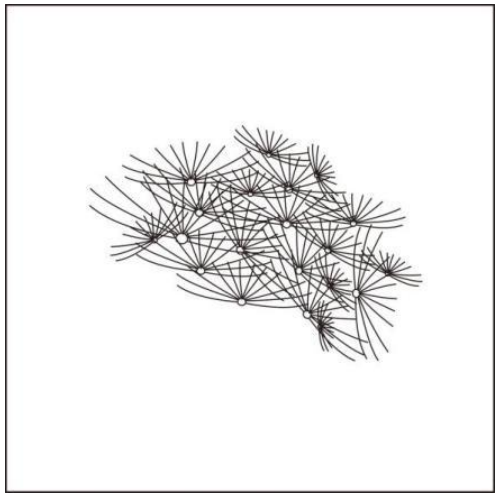


Figure 4.29: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Biomimetic Repetition Organization Method
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The suitability approach is to fit the pattern within a specific shape area.



Figure 4.30: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Suitability Organizational Method
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The combinatorial approach involves combining standalone patterns in a symbolic and semantic form so that new patterns are used to convey new semantic meanings. Take dragon patterns as an example, if two dragons are combined, the symbolic meaning is two dragons playing with a pearl. But if it is a dragon and a phoenix, it is called a dragon and the phoenix presents auspiciousness.



Figure 4.31: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Combinatorial Organizational Method
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The other type is the free-standing compositional method borrowed from traditional Chinese painting, with representational mostly drawn from Chinese painting (Lan, 1992). This is very different from the Liangshan region, where a completely orderly pattern organisation scheme was adopted.



Figure 4.32: Dafang Yi Traditional Lacquerware Ornamentation - Independent Composition Method in Traditional Chinese Painting
Source: Researcher's Illustration

iii. Modern Ornamentation of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

There are two main types of modern ornamentation in Liangshan Yi lacquerware. The first one is the reproduction and redesign of traditional lacquerware ornamentation. There is nothing wrong with the reproduction of ornamentation, and it is certainly not innovative. There are two ways to redesign the decoration, one is through the innovation of the ornamental motif, which can successfully create new symbolic semantics and image paradigms, for example, the image of the Mulong in the picture below is the new motif pattern designed by Jiwu Wuqie in combination with the theme of the previous Yi legends (Jivu, Interview). This is a relatively good breakthrough, as before this, it was rare to see complete animal figures in traditional Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, and this pattern, which uses the cult of the eagle as a symbolic expression, is very innovative.



Figure 4.33: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Innovative Ornamentation with Eagle as the Motif
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

The other is through the change of shape and the reconstruction of the organisational scheme of the motifs. In the design of the Moon Lute ornamentation of Jiwu Wuga shown below, in the middle, the fire striker motif, which is the main unitary motif,

has undergone a stylistic change to form a heart-like variant. At the same time, the moulding of the ware and the organisation of the ornamentation break away from the complete circular appearance of the traditional Moon Lute, and the standard closed band of ornamentation partially breaks the sense of stability and symmetrical order, forming a novel balanced pattern. However, this approach only changes the form of the ornamentation, not its symbolic semantics (Jiwu, interview).



Figure 4.34: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Reconstruction of Fire Striker Pattern
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

The picture below shows a modern Yi lacquerware candy box. An analysis of its ornamentation design reveals several changes. Firstly, in similar high-footed types of traditional Yi lacquerware, the foot rim is rarely decorated with ornamentation because it is meant to be placed on the floor for use and the foot rim is largely invisible. Nowadays, however, the candy box is to be placed on the table, and the foot rim will be within people's sight, so the decoration is necessary. Secondly, the pattern on the foot rim is mainly formed by repeating the water ripples pattern and fingernail pattern in a two-sided continuous hierarchical arrangement, which is consistent with the traditional pattern organisation before, but the water ripples pattern and fingernail pattern are not combined to

appear in the traditional ornamentation for decoration on the eating utensils, because the symbolic semantics of these two patterns are not relevant. The reason for this is that nowadays lacquerware is no longer consumed by a localised group of people, so the original symbolic meaning of the motifs is not followed in the combination of ornamentation in most cases.



Figure 4.35: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Innovative Ornamentation on Candy Box
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

The second case is the imitation and borrowing of decorative elements from other arts. This kind of ornamentation is usually not used alone, but often combined with traditional ornamentation. And of course, the symbolic meaning will be deviated. The picture below shows the decorative ornamentation of a painted lacquerware stool designed and made by Jiwu Wuqie. The central pattern can be seen as a cogwheel-like pattern, an image of industrialised patterns, but it can also be described as a variation close to the sunbeam pattern but without the specific symbolic meaning of its predecessor (Jiwu, Interview).



Figure 4.36: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Innovative Ornamentation on Round Stool
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

In addition to this, there is a very typical example of a now very popular decorative lacquerware plate that often uses as its main image a figure pattern in the flat decorative style, which first appeared in the heavily coloured decorative paintings of the Yunnan region of China. The figure in the left picture below is a Yi ethnic hero, Zhige Alu, who used to appear only in the paintings of Bimo, but now it is also used in decorative wares beyond the religious limitations. The main figure on the right is based on a flat decorative figure pattern.



Figure 4.37: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Hand-painted Figure Lacquer Display Plate
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

iv. Modern Ornamentation of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Three main types of expressions of modern ornamentation in Dafang Yi lacquerware exist.The first one is the reproduction and redesign of traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation, which also has three cases. Firstly, the main way of reproduction is still based on representational painting patterns, in which the representative artists are Xia Dexin, Wu Shizhong, Liu Keli and Yang Chenglong, each of them specialising in different themes. Xia Dexin is good at painting golden dragons, Wu Shizhong is good at painting peonies, Liu Keli is good at chrysanthemums, and Yang Chenglong is good at painting landscapes. Each artist had a unique artistic style and techniques that made their works uniquely appealing (Xia, Interview).



Figure 4.38: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Floral and Bird Painting Patterns
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Secondly, the redesign of traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation appearing in the Dafang region is quite different from the way it is done in the Liangshan region. The reason is that currently there is no Yi lacquerware produced in Dafang that is the same as that in Liangshan unless there is an order for it, which is very rare. So even if the unit-shaped motifs that are homologous to traditional Yi lacquerware are applied, the differences in organisational schemes will present different visual effects. The figure below shows a tasting wine pot produced by the Dafang State Lacquerware Factory in the 1980s, where the main motif chosen is a combination of bull's-eye and yin and yang fishes, but in a symmetrical manner on both sides of the pot, an organisation that has not been used in traditional lacquerware ornamentation in the Liangshan region.



Figure 4.39: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Innovative Ornamentation on the Tasting Wine Pot
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Finally, there is the combination of many different attributes into a pattern with traditional Yi visual characteristics. Below is a decorative lacquer plate designed by Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Style Lacquerware Development Co. Ltd, which uses a combination of hidden pattern, painted and inlaid techniques, with the central pattern being a combination of Yi sunburst ornamentation, banded motifs and star motifs, and the outer motifs being bird motifs and abstract motifs that mimic those of Han Dynasty lacquerware.



Figure 4.40: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Innovative Ornamentation on the Display Plate
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

There are also ornamental motifs based on the Yi script. The Yi ethnic group has an independent and complete writing system that has evolved from images to symbols to words. The Liangshan Yi script in Sichuan is horizontal, while the Dafang Yi script is vertical (Bujimo, 2021). Although the Yi script still conveys meanings of blessing and good fortune in modern lacquerware, it is more often utilised as a decorative element (Han, 2021).

Below is a vase with Yi script designed by Gao Guangyou, which, in addition to its decorative meaning, is also linked to Han poetry culture, as the Yi text on it is a complete Tang poem, "Sympathy for Farmers".



Figure 4.41: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Ornamental Designs on Lacquer Vase Featuring Yi Ethnic Script
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

The second is the borrowing and reconstruction of motifs from other arts, including figure patterns in the flat decorative style and traditional Han lacquerware patterns.



Figure 4.42: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Inspiration and Reconstruction from Other Patterns
Source: Photos Provided by Gao

The third type is the texture patterns generated by learning lacquerware craftsmanship from other regions, such as eggshell inlay and variegated coating techniques.



Figure 4.43: Dafang Modern Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation - Textures Patterns Generated by New Lacquerware Techniques
Source: Photo Provided by Gao, Photographed by the Researcher

4.2.2.3 Ornamentation Analysis

i. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Ornamentation

In Liangshang region, The shape of the unit-shaped pattern mostly has the form of imitating natural objects or things, as well as corresponding symbolic semantics that are stable and unchanging, but there is also the phenomenon of one motif with multiple meanings and one meaning with multiple motifs. These ornamentation have become one of the unique artistic characteristics of the Liangshan Yi region (Museum of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, 1982).

The placement of ornamentation is closely related to the semantics of the patterns and the shapes of lacquerware. For example, wooden helmets and wooden pots are commonly decorated with bull's-eye and fish spine motifs; wooden spoons are often adorned with window grille and fingernail motifs on the outside; wooden plates usually feature spring source and fingernail motifs on the inside and bull's-eye and fishing net motifs on the outside. Round wine pots are often decorated with sesame seeds, rapeseed

motifs, and petal motifs, while lacquer bowls commonly display sun motifs on the inside and chicken beak and chicken eye motifs on the outside (Song & Liu, 1982).

In Dafang, the placement and design of ornamentation demonstrate both similarities and differences compared to Liangshan lacquerware. Zhang (2003) states that the lacquerware in the collection of the Dafang County Shexiang Museum was sourced from the local area. Based on this collection, it is evident that some traditional lacquerware types in the region share homologous artistic characteristics with those of the Liangshan region. Therefore, the ornamentation forms and organisational schemes exhibit similarities within this subset of lacquerware. However, a major issue is the lack of physical and documentary records for this part of Dafang lacquerware. Currently, lacquerware production in Dafang no longer aligns with the styles of the Liangshan region. Instead, Dafang has developed a distinct set of ornamentation forms that are significantly different from those of Liangshan lacquerware (Chen, interview).

In comparison, the traditional ornamentation of Liangshan Yi lacquerware is usually divided into pictorial and non-pictorial forms with specific shapes, and in the actual process of use, unit and continuous patterns are formed through a regular combination of schemes, and each has a relatively clear symbolic semantics. Riegl (2016) points out that in art, the geometric programming of natural forms surely predates the formation of symbols. From this perspective, symbolism may have initially been the cult of object gods. Object gods are usually physical objects borrowed from nature or things that are man-made but still have the form of natural objects. However, when decorative lines are presented as an art form, they do not reproduce natural objects realistically but are transformed using basic formal laws such as symmetry and rhythm. For example, straight lines are transformed into

geometric patterns such as triangles, squares, diamonds, and jagged shapes, while curved lines evolve into shapes such as circles, wavy lines, and spirals. All of these geometric patterns derive from the basics of plane geometry. In art history, they are often referred to as geometric patterns. Therefore, when a work of art uses these geometric patterns exclusively or predominantly, it is referred to as a geometric style. From this, it can be seen that the two-dimensional plane geometric style of traditional lacquerware ornamentation in the Liangshan region reflects the cultural background of this region, which has long remained uniquely ethnic due to the closed environment formed by a long period of slavery society, resulting in a single abstracted aesthetic style.

The pattern of traditional Yi lacquerware in the Dafang region is a composite species. There are types of ornamentation that are homologous to those in the Liangshan region, but there are more inconsistent types of ornamentation. These ornamentation are mainly made through plane decorative techniques and realistic painting techniques, or a combination of both, and all present a figurative visual image that remains consistent with the reference object. Because the patterns are concrete and figurative, the symbolic semantics of traditional patterns in the Dafang region are often conveyed through techniques such as harmonisation, metonymy, punning and symbolism (Xia, interview). While the abstract geometrical ornamentation usually appears as partial decorative patterns, the symbolic semantics of some patterns have clear semantics and are in harmony with the semantics of the main patterns, for example, when the dragon patterns appear as the main patterns, they are accompanied by cloud and water motifs. However, some are not clear and simply appear as an accompaniment to achieve compositional balance (Gao, interview). Therefore, the traditional lacquerware ornamentation in the Dafang region is not a single abstract geometric style, but more of a representational realistic style, reflecting the

existence of a multicultural background in this region brought about by the integration of ethnic groups, which has led to the formation of an open and diverse expression of artistic style.

Formal Analysis can be described as a process of simplification, an organisational scheme of modelling elements (dots, lines and surfaces) (Minah, 2008). The traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation of Liangshan and Dafang is much more different than similar in terms of modelling elements (dots, lines and surfaces) and organisational schemes. These differences are reflected not only in the logic and form of ornamentation organisation but also in the profound influence of cultural backgrounds on decorative styles.

In the Liangshan region, symmetrical forms of ornamentation are divided into two types: central symmetry and central axis symmetry. Central symmetry typically features a single unit motif as the main design in the centre, surrounded by one or more layers of continuous patterns serving as secondary motifs. This organisational form is commonly found on round and flatware items, such as the flat undersides of wooden plates or tabletop decorations. Central axis symmetry, on the other hand, involves unit motifs forming mirror-image symmetry either left-right or top-bottom and is more commonly seen on armour or the outer surfaces of tableware. Repetition is the most popular method of combining unit motifs in Liangshan's traditional lacquerware, with various iterations creating bipartite (most common) and quadripartite continuous patterns. Common forms include scattered-point repetition, straight-line repetition, wave-line repetition, and composite arrangements.

The hierarchical method is primarily used to organise multiple decorative patterns on objects. This approach can either use longitudinal bands of continuous patterns to create an integrated effect or distinguish between primary and secondary motifs to present a sense of layering. Additionally, unit motifs can be recombined to form new patterns. For instance, adjusting the orientation of the pumpkin seed motif transforms it into a four-petal flower pattern, shifting its symbolic meaning from the pumpkin seed to the floral petal. These schemes of ornamentation utilise simple elements through rearrangement and combination to express complex cultural semantics.

The hierarchical approach is the most widely used one, and it is presented on all traditional lacquerware mouldings, so the ornamentation decoration of Yi lacquerware will leave the viewer with a visual impression of a full painting (Jiwu, interview).

In contrast, the organisational schemes of Dafang's ornamentation are more flexible and diverse, incorporating natural forms and traditional Chinese painting elements to present a more open decorative style. Repetition in Dafang includes not only geometric arrangements but also patterns inspired by the natural distribution of organic forms, such as pine tree leaves or mountain landscapes. This naturalistic approach enhances the vividness of visual expression, while symbolic meanings are further strengthened through techniques like metaphor and metonymy. Moreover, Dafang employs highly symbolic compositional methods, such as combining motifs into auspicious designs like "Two Dragons Playing with a Pearl" or "The Dragon and the Phoenix Present Auspiciousness." These combinations enrich the semantic meanings of the patterns and highlight the multicultural integration characteristic of the region.

From a cultural perspective, Liangshan's ornamentation style, shaped by its historically isolated environment, tends to be more abstract and geometric. In contrast, Dafang's style reflects openness and diversity influenced by the integration of multiple ethnic cultures. These cultural differences have ultimately resulted in significant variations in ornamentation organisation between the two regions, each developing a distinctive expression of ethnic cultural identity.

ii. Analysis of the Evolution of Modern Ornamentation

The evolution of modern lacquerware ornamentation is a process of convergence between tradition and modernity, and the fusion of culture and craftsmanship. When comparing the modern lacquerware ornamentation of the Liangshan and Dafang regions, it becomes clear that their development paths share commonalities but also show significant differences. These can be summarised into several approaches: the preservation and redesign of traditional patterns, original innovation, the borrowing and integration of external elements, and the evolution of craftsmanship.

In the Liangshan region, the redesign of traditional lacquerware ornamentation often involves changes in the form and organisational structure of the patterns, leading to significant transformations in the appearance of modern lacquerware. For example, Jiwu Wuga's design of the "Moon Lute" ornamentation breaks the traditional circular structure by altering the arrangement and style of the motifs, creating a more dynamic visual effect. Although this innovation changes the form of the decoration, its symbolic meaning remains unchanged.

Unavoidably, Some modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation organisational schemes are only considered in terms of the graphic needs of the decoration, to meet the

visual characteristics of typical Yi lacquerware ornamentation, and to make the people who appreciate it realise that it is a visual art symbol of the Yi ethnic group, and as a result, the specific symbolic semantics of the ornamentation are no longer so rigorous, and are either inaccurate or missing (Jiwu, Interview).

Artists in the Dafang region, on the other hand, build upon traditional patterns while incorporating more artistic expression and technical innovation. By combining traditional representative motifs with new visual organisation methods, modern lacquerware ornamentation in Dafang exhibits a unique regional style.

In addition to the preservation and redesign of traditional elements, the evolution of modern lacquerware ornamentation is also characterised by the borrowing and integration of external elements. Both Liangshan and Dafang lacquerware designs have been influenced by other art forms. For instance, Jiwu Wuqie's design of a lacquer stool in Liangshan incorporates a cogwheel-like pattern, an industrial-style decoration that, while diverging from the traditional symbolic meanings, adds a modern touch to the lacquerware. Decorative human figures have also started to appear. In Dafang, external decorative elements from other regions are more widely adopted, such as the use of figure patterns from the flat decorative style of Yunnan, which have been applied to lacquerware decoration. This approach transcends the limitations of traditional patterns, making traditional symbols and human figures more universal.

According to the general methodology of art historical research, one can transcend the boundaries between ethnography and art history only if the work of art depicts human endeavours and achievements. Geometric, plant and animal patterns are usually regarded as purely decorative elements. However, these images take on objective

importance when figures are present in artworks (Riegl, 2016). Therefore, the emergence of human figures as a creative theme in the Yi ethnic region, which has undergone the baptism of modern civilisation, is also an evolutionary process in line with the needs of modern society.

Original innovation is another key aspect, with artists creating new symbolic meanings and visual symbols. For example, Jiwu Wuqie's "Wood Dragon" motif in Liangshan merges the animal images from Yi folklore, providing a fresh cultural expression for traditional animal patterns. In Dafang, Gao Guangyou created unique Yi script decorative symbols.

In terms of lacquerware techniques, Liangshan and Dafang show different emphases in their craftsmanship evolution. Designs in Liangshan tend to focus on introducing new decorative elements within traditional forms, primarily using painting techniques. In contrast, Dafang has enriched its lacquerware's visual effects by borrowing craftsmanship techniques from other regions, such as eggshell inlay and variegated coating techniques, which add a unique texture to the decoration.

Overall, the evolution of modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation reflects the continuous collision and fusion of tradition and innovation. Liangshan focuses on preserving symbolic meanings and changing compositional forms, while Dafang emphasizes artistic fusion and the diversification of techniques.

4.2.3 Analysis of Colour

Based on the six categories of colour harmony meaning proposed by Burchett (1991), the researcher used the colour design scheme of Yi lacquerware in the two regions as a comparative study, which specifically includes colour choice, colour relationship (proportion, distribution and dominance) and colour mood. Burchett, (2002) further states that in the definition of colour attributes, colour order is the determinant of colour harmony. Both in Liangshan and Dafang regions, traditional colour schemes tend to pursue colour harmony in terms of colour attributes. In addition, due to the unique painting process of lacquerware, the body of the ware will have a uniform base colour outside of the painted decoration, which will be distinguished in this study by the base colour and the ornamentation colour.

By descriptively comparing 25 representative lacquerware pieces were chosen, and integrating stylistic analysis and thematic analysis from Iconography, as well as Order Sense Analysis and Formal Analysis theory, the differences and similarities in the colour of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan and Dafang regions will be identified.

4.2.3.1 Colour Classification

i. Traditional Colour of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

In the Liangshan region, traditional lacquerware follows a colour scheme of black, red and yellow, which is typical of ethnic identifiers (Harrell, 2000).

Colours: Black, Red, Yellow.

Brightness and Saturation: Black (low brightness, colourless); Red, Yellow

(high brightness, high saturation).

Hue: Red and Yellow are warm tones.

ii. Traditional Colour of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

In the Dafang region, the number of colours used in traditional lacquerware exceeds three, and in addition to red, yellow and black, cyan (blue-green) and white are usually added, hence the reference to five colours (Long, 2014). From the numerous Yi literature, it is clear that the five-colour theory exists in different Yi ethnic groups in different regions, except that it is more explicitly expressed in Dafang Yi lacquerware.

Colours: Black, White, Red, Yellow, Cyan.

Brightness and Saturation: Black, White (colourless); Red, Yellow, Cyan (high saturation).

Hue: Red and Yellow are warm tones, Cyan is a cool tone.

iii. Modern Colour of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

In the Liangshan region, the richness of the colour palette has been enhanced as the variety of ware types has increased a lot and the themes and forms of ornamentation have been expanded. However, the colour elements of Yi modern lacquerware are still based on the basic shades of black, red and yellow.

Main Colours: Black, Red, Yellow.

Brightness and Saturation: Black (low brightness, colourless); Red, Yellow (high brightness, high saturation).

Hue: Red and Yellow are warm tones.

What is more, the process of making colour lacquer has changed so that any colour can be obtained. So theoretically, the determination of colour relationships is no longer limited by the process.

iv. Modern Colour of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

The colours of modern Yi lacquerware in Dafang are known as five-colourism, which derives from the richness and variability of the colours (Gao, Interview).

Main Colours: Black, White, Red, Yellow, Cyan.

Brightness and Saturation: Black, White (colourless); Red, Yellow, Cyan (high saturation).

Hue: Red and Yellow are warm tones, Cyan is a cool tone.

4.2.3.2 Colour Description

i. Traditional Colours of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The Liangshan traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation organization is often presented in a complex hierarchical arrangement, and basically by the red and yellow colours, so it will result in the phenomenon of the pattern in the shape of the overly full of colour, which will require black as a spacer to make the more jumping colour scheme to reduce the over-activity to maintain a sense of balance on the visual side. Therefore, the colour scheme of traditional lacquerware in Liangshan shows that black (colourless) is usually used as the base colour to cover the whole moulding, and red and yellow (coloured) are used as the more vivid colour combination for the ornamentation.



Figure 4.44: Liangshan Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Black Serves as the Base Colour, with Red and Yellow Used for Pattern Colour
Source: The Photo is Sourced from the China Tobacco Museum

There are also monochromatic lacquerware, which means that there are only base colours and no ornamentation colours on the wares. However, there are only colourless (black and black-like) wares, not coloured wares. There are two kinds of cases: one is the requirement of the instruments for Bimo's conjuration, such as the Ritual fan used in the Bimo rituals. Another is the material conditions, many of the lower classes of the common Yi people used by the daily utensils are relatively simple, and can only be applied a few layers of raw lacquer, in the drying of the formation of a similar black colour. Or only black lacquer can be applied, which is the most readily available colour lacquer. The latter monochromatic lacquer is not symbolic, nor is it the result of aesthetic tendencies (Jiwu, interview).



Figure 4.45: Liangshan Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Monochromatic Lacquerware
Source: China National Museum of Ethnicities et al. (2016). A Collection of Cultural Artifacts of the Yi People. National Publishing House & Photographed by the Researcher

As colour needs to be subordinate to formal features and cannot exist in isolation, it comes after the presence of form (Albir, 1994). The traditional Yi lacquerware colour design scheme in both regions is based on moulding and ornamentation in terms of proportions, layout and dominance to create a harmonious colour relationship to avoid redundant decorative colours being used.

The colour relationships of traditional lacquerware colours in the Liangshan region, such as the proportion, layout and dominant colour choices, are usually related to the function and shape of the ware, which can be perceived from the difference between footed and footless wares in the wares types. First of all, footed ware will most likely be divided into a distinct coloured and uncoloured layout, with the foot in uncoloured black and the body in coloured paint, and the proportion of coloured wares will be greater than that of uncoloured wares. Flat-bottomed wares would have been decorated with either coloured lacquer or coloured ornamentation throughout, usually with the largest proportion of red. Secondly, for open-mouthed wares, such as bowls and plates, both the interior and

exterior would be decorated with coloured ornamentation, whereas on the other hand, only the exterior would be decorated with coloured ornamentation. The dominant colours of the majority of ware types are usually warm tones (mostly red), which is related to the choice of yin and yang attributes of the decorative motifs (Bao, 2012).

As a concrete example, take the footed wooden bowl and plate and the footless flat-bottomed bowl in tableware as a comparison. The ratio of uncoloured to colour on the wooden bowl and plate is 1:3, and there is a clear split layout. The body of the ware is covered with painted ornamentation and the foot is often black (or red) with little ornamentation layout. The dominant colours are red and yellow, or one of them. Flat-bottomed bowls are coloured throughout the body, usually with the largest proportion of red. Colourless black appears as an isolating colour in the form of lines and surfaces, with a small proportion and a scattered layout, while yellow usually appears as dots and linear decoration. The dominant colours are mostly red and yellow.



Figure 4.46: Liangshan Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Comparison of Colour Layout between Lacquerware with Foot and Lacquerware without Foot
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Colour mood is based on traditional colour associations and symbols (Burchett, 2002). The Guizhou Yi document "Chronicles of the Origins - The Origin of Colours" (1990) says: In ancient times, when the heavens and the earth were nourished, the

southeast and the northwest were the four colours. Green appeared to the east of the heavens and the earth, red to the south of the heavens and the earth, white to the west of the heavens and the earth, and black to the north of the heavens and the earth. And with the green colour, he painted the image of the shining sun, and with the red colour he painted the image of the white moon, and with the white colour he painted the sky, and with the black colour he painted a picture on the great rock, and he painted the earth. After a long separation, the old man, Shegougu, invented the colour yellow to paint the picture of beauty. This is very typical of the Yi five-colourism. However, through the Yi literature in both regions, we can see that in fact, the colour concept of the Yi people is not a single unchanging one, and there are different concepts of colour symbolism, such as three-colourism, four-colourism, and five-colourism (Baqie, 2003). Moreover, colour is inferior to shape in terms of its role in message transmission (Arnheim, 1954). Colour cannot be symbolic in isolation from the content of the form because different individual viewers will substitute their associations and create bias in the transmission of information (Bao, 2012).

Jiwu (interview) points out that the traditional Yi lacquerware colours in Liangshan are passed down from ancestors, black is the land, red is the fire, and yellow represents beauty. It is agreed which materials are used to make the colour lacquer: black with pot soot, red with vermilion and yellow with stone yellow. The use of other colours was not considered, and no other materials were developed at the time to make colours other than the three colours. Baqie (2003) argues in his study that although the black, red and yellow colour scheme of lacquerware in the Liangshan region is the basis for the derivation and development of the Yi culture of the three-colour sayings, it does not entirely reflect the level of the Yi people's knowledge of and use of colours but rather reflects the wide availability of colour in the geography in which they are situated, Rather,

it reflects the widespread and readily available sources of raw materials in the geographical environment of the Yi people and the degree of development of their production technology and is a living colour. In the eyes of some scholars and outsiders, these colours are regarded as the most obvious symbols and representative colours of the Yi people, however, in terms of deeper meaning, they lack cultural symbolism. Therefore, the colours have to be attached to the ornamentation to reveal their symbolic semantics and to transmit the emotions of the colours in a meaningful way.

The Liangshan Yi people's perception of the world is based on the concept of yin and yang, so the colours of the traditional Yi lacquerware in Liangshan are also differentiated in this way. Usually, if the patterns are masculine, such as chicken eye, bull's eye, rooster's comb, ram's horn, etc., and if they are related to fire, such as fire striker pattern and sunbeams pattern, these elements are mostly expressed in warm colours of red and yellow, which is due to the cult of fire culture of the Yi people. On the other hand, the scroll pattern, swirl pattern, star pattern, moon pattern, flower bud pattern, water ripple pattern and so on belong to the feminine elements, so when choosing the colours, they are also more inclined to the feminine and cold tones. Often, red and yellow masculine motifs, which are rich in masculine light, are blended with feminine colours to achieve a harmonious tonal effect (Bao, 2012). The final result is an abstract decorative colour style.



Figure 4.47: Liangshan Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Symbolism
Source: China National Museum of Ethnicities et al. (2016). A Collection of Cultural Artifacts of the Yi People. National Publishing House

ii. Traditional Colours of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

Firstly, in the form of traditional lacquerware ornamentation, Dafang Lacquerware adopts more representational and realistic patterns, which tends to restore the stylistic form and colour relationship of the objects in reality. Secondly, there is no strong and direct conflict between the colours, as in the case of Dafang traditional lacquerware. Plus, the five colours have both light and dark, cold and warm tones, which can better complete the decorative and realistic colour relationships. Therefore, this has resulted in the traditional lacquerware in the Dafang region not having a specific colour scheme, but rather matching the colours according to the thematic content of the ornamentation, thus forming two types of colour styles. One type is the subtle and introverted colour style, which is based on the theme of decorative motifs. For example, the flat plum blossom motifs are usually decorated by forming dotted plum blossoms in monochrome on top of a monochrome base colour, presenting a light elegant and noble picture effect (Chen, interview).



Figure 4.48: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Monochromatic Base Colour and Monochromatic Pattern Colour
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

One category is the bright and colourful colour scheme style, which focuses on realistic pattern themes and restores the colour scheme relationship of traditional Chinese

paintings. For example, an opulent peony motif will usually have black as the base colour, red and yellow as the flower colours, and green as the leaf colours. Under the background of black, the complementary relationship of coloured colours appears very prominent, presenting a rich and atmospheric picture effect.



Figure 4.49: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - the colour Scheme of Traditional Chinese Flower and Bird Paintings
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

Another difference is that in the Dafang region, a special metallic colour, gold, is often chosen as a decorative colour for lacquerware. First, it is used as a separate colour to enhance the contrast. The use of gold as a decorative colour alone on the base colour, or the use of gold in the combination of decorative colours to highlight specific decorative elements, can make the ornamentation in the overall decoration more visually appealing, thus enhancing the nobility of the lacquerware and embodying the symbols of auspiciousness and wealth. Secondly, as an isolating colour, gold can produce a balancing and coordinating effect. When certain colours form a strong contrast and disrupt the colour harmony, it can balance out other more saturated or brighter colours, making the overall decoration more harmonious.



Figure 4.50: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Gold Ornamentation
Source: Photo Provided by Chen

Dafang also exists (monochrome) lacquerware with only base colours, usually black and red, very similar to the traditional Han lacquerware that often shows black and red as the main body colours (Du & Wu, 2012).

The colour relationships of the homologous lacquerware forms from the Dafang and Liangshan regions are the same, the colour relationships of the other traditional lacquerware forms vary considerably due to the coloured attributes and themes of ornamentation. Since the organisation of traditional ornamentation is usually presented in two ways on the moulding form, namely, standalone patterns (part of which are suitable) and continuous patterns, and unlike in the Liangshan region, they do not cover the entire ware body, it is often the base colours of the ware body (usually black and red) that make up the largest proportion. In terms of layout, if the pattern is independent and suitable, it will form a coloured layout with a sense of visual centre. In the case of repeating continuous patterns, a banded split-colour layout is formed, with both coloured and uncoloured patterns, but often with a monochromatic appearance. The dominant colours are usually black and red (Xia, interview).

As a concrete example, take a decorative ware vase an example, and select standalone patterns and suitable patterns, realistic colours and decorative colours for

comparison. Traditional lacquerware with realistic patterns is still basically commonly used with colourless black as the base colour, and it occupies the largest proportion. With colourless as the base, the colour attributes of realistic patterns can be clearly shown, and if there are overly bright coloured patterns, they will also appear to be harmonious because of the coordination of large areas of colourless, which is in line with the solemn and atmospheric aesthetic tendency of Han culture. Plane decorative patterns usually use orderly repetition and disorderly repetition combinations to form continuous patterns and pictorial patterns, and often use non-realistic colours (decorative colours), but the proportion of pattern colours will not be more than the basic colours. Most layouts use monochrome as the decorative colour to divide the basic colour, forming either stable and harmonious or lively and dynamic colour styles. In general, the base colour of the ware is the dominant colour (black and red mostly).



Figure 4.51: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Comparison between Realistic Colours and Decorative Colours
Source: Photo Provided by Gao & Chen

In the case of traditional lacquerware from the Dafang region, there is also a situation where the material determines the colour. For example, black and red are often used as the base colours to paint the entire ware, because apart from aesthetic pursuits,

these two colours are relatively easy to obtain and achieve in terms of natural materials and craftsmanship (Du & Wu, 2012).

The symbolism of colour is even more strictly dependent on the form of ornamentation. Character motifs such as longevity and happiness are often given the warm colours of red and yellow because the traditional Chinese culture of the Han Chinese people is also based on the concept of yin and yang, which are auspicious and joyful colours that signify good fortune and goodness. Lacquerware offered as tribute to the royal family, for example, often depicts dragons and phoenixes in gold, as both gold and dragon and phoenix patterns reflect the status and wealth of the royal family. In addition, there are realistic painting patterns with realistic colours (Xia, interview). Two colour styles, decorative and realistic, were developed.



Figure 4.52: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Symbolism
Source: Photo Provided by Xia

iii. Modern Colours of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware

The colour elements of Yi modern lacquerware are still based on the basic shades of black, red and yellow, which mainly stems from the need to maintain the remarkable visual colour relationships of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region, to maintain its unique ethnic and regional artistic elements. Therefore, the common colours

on modern lacquerware will add cyan (blue and green) and white, and this colour relationship is often used in the embroidery of Yi ethnic costumes, which is also in line with the traditional five-colourism of the Yi ethnic, whose intention is still to maintain the colour elements of ethnicity (Jiwu, Interview). However, in terms of the layout of the columns, the newly added cyan and white are under-represented and usually do not take centre stage as the central pattern, and the dominant colours are still warm.



Figure 4.53: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Innovation
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Monochromatic colours appear as decorative colours, reflecting the geometric decorative style.



Figure 4.54: Liangshan Modern Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Innovation
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

iv. Modern Colours of Dafang Yi Lacquerware

In Dafang region, there are also two trends in modern lacquerware colour relations. One is to continue to maintain the traditional colour relations influenced by Han lacquerware and enrich them on this basis, and the other is to approach the colour relations of the Yi five-colourism but will be closer to modern design aesthetics. The former is still dominated by independent patterns and supplemented by continuous patterns, resulting in the fact that both decorative and realistic colours are based on the theme of the decoration to determine the quantity, and the layout and position are also determined by the organisation of the ornamentation. On the whole, the base colour of the ware is still the dominant colour, and the selective range of colours is enlarged. Specific examples, the same realistic bird and flower patterns, in the traditional colour relationship, the colour will be more pure and flat, with less variability. However, in modern colour schemes, there are more subtle gradations of colour relationships, and pastel shades appear, not only because of the improvement of the lacquer process but also because modern Chinese paintings are more layered in their colour expression.



Figure 4.55: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Innovation
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

The latter chooses to approach the colour relationship of Liangshan lacquerware, then it will adopt the subtraction method, because there is still a relatively big difference between the lacquerware production and decorative process adopted, and the modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation in Dafang, although it will adopt the same form of expression as that of the Liangshan region, usually uses the subtraction method, so the accompanying colour relationship will also be simplified, with a simple contrast of decorative colours, and the proportion and layout will be based on one colour as the main colour, and the others as the second, with the dominant colours being very obvious. As a specific example, this colour relationship is common in cultural and creative products. The figure below shows the lacquerware of a business card holder, the overall appearance of which is mainly red lacquer, with black lacquer on the inside, and local gold-coloured ornamentation formed by red lacquer piles.



Figure 4.56: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Innovation
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

The emergence of monochrome lacquerware, such as Green Gem Sand lacquerware, which is a type of monochrome lacquerware with colours, is a result of the introduction of the Fuzhou lacquerware process from the 1980s onwards.



Figure 4.57: Dafang Traditional Yi Lacquerware Colour - Colour Innovation
Source: Photo Provided by Gao

4.2.3.3 Colour Analysis

i. Comparative Analysis of Traditional Colour

The traditional colour schemes of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan and Dafang regions of China reflect distinct cultural preferences, symbolic meanings, and functional influences, while also highlighting regional variations in decoration and material

availability. Although both regions employ a wide range of colours, their approaches to colour use and the underlying cultural significance differ markedly.

In Liangshan, the traditional colour palette of Yi lacquerware primarily consists of black, red, and yellow, which are closely tied to the Yi people's worldview. Black is typically associated with the earth, red with fire, and yellow represents beauty and life. Generally, black serves as the base colour, covering the entire form, and is contrasted with vivid red and yellow decorations. This colour scheme ensures visual balance by using black as a spacer to avoid overly saturated colours. In some cases, monochromatic lacquerware is produced, typically coated with a single base colour, often black or red, due to material or functional limitations.

In contrast, Dafang features a more diverse colour scheme, incorporating not only traditional red, yellow, and black but also adding cyan (blue-green) and white, forming a unique five-colour palette. This expansion of colour options provides greater possibilities for decoration. Unlike in Liangshan, Dafang lacquerware often employs more expressive and realistic patterns, with colour arrangements usually based on the thematic content of the decoration. While black as a base colour is still common, the introduction of gold adds a layer of luxury and auspicious symbolism. Gold is used not only to highlight decorative elements but also to balance and harmonise other contrasting colours.

In both regions, colour usage is closely tied to functionality and symbolism. In Liangshan, colours are often linked to the Yi people's belief in the five elements and spiritual culture, with warm tones of red and yellow representing the masculine (associated with fire), while black represents the feminine (associated with the earth). This interaction of colours reflects the philosophy of yin and yang, emphasising the balance of opposing

forces. Similarly, the five-colour scheme in Dafang offers a subtle combination of warm and cool tones, better expressing natural and spiritual symbolism. The addition of gold further reinforces its symbolic meaning, representing prosperity and good fortune.

Furthermore, the availability of materials and the development of techniques have also shaped the colour choices in both regions. In Liangshan, the use of natural materials such as pot soot (black), vermilion (red), and stone yellow (yellow) indicates a more limited range of colours for production, but this simplicity is highly functional. These materials correspond to the practical nature of some Yi lacquerware, which is mainly used for everyday life and lacks complex decoration. In Dafang, however, the region reflects a higher level of material resources and craftsmanship, with the use of gold and intricate colour relationships further demonstrating the refinement of the craft.

In conclusion, the traditional colour schemes of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang not only reflect practical considerations but also convey profound cultural and spiritual meanings. Liangshan focuses on limiting the use of colours to maintain a balance of elemental forces and symbolism, while Dafang embraces a wider colour range, offering greater decorative flexibility and realistic expression. Nevertheless, both regions demonstrate a deep understanding of colour relationships, where colour is not only aesthetically appealing but also conveys deeper cultural and spiritual messages.

ii. Analysis of the Evolution of Modern Colour

People's perception of colour is constantly changing with the social times (Porter, & Mikellides, 1976). Colour harmony is considered to be an open-ended phenomenon that can be defined as the phenomenon that elicits a positive aesthetic response when different

colours are observed at the same time. It is influenced by a variety of factors such as age, gender, cultural experiences, personality, environmental, and temporal factors and of course, depends on the personal characteristics and cultural background of the observer. Therefore it can only be described, defined or predicted in a probabilistic way (O'Connor, 2010). The modern colour evolution of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan and Dafang regions reflects a blend of the continuation of traditional colour schemes and the integration of contemporary design sensibilities.

In the Liangshan region, modern lacquerware retains traditional colour schemes while introducing new hues. However, these new colours are not prominent and typically serve as decorative accents rather than being the dominant colours in central patterns. This approach allows modern lacquerware to maintain the cultural characteristics of Yi lacquerware, with the colour relationships designed to reflect both the ethnic and regional uniqueness, without straying too far from the traditional colour framework. This conservative colour evolution ensures the visual identity of Yi lacquerware, conveying a respect for traditional artistic elements.

In contrast, the evolution of colour relations in Dafang presents two distinct trends. One trend continues to uphold the traditional colour schemes influenced by Han lacquerware, enriching them further, while the other seeks to align more closely with Yi five-colourism. There exists a local tendency to revive the production and sale of lacquerware with visual characteristics similar to those of Liangshan lacquerware. The former still relies on a base colour, supplemented by other colours, with the colour use being more delicate and refined. For example, the introduction of gradient colours and pastel tones not only reflects the advancement of lacquerware craftsmanship but also aligns

with the layering of colours seen in modern Chinese painting. This trend emphasises a respect for traditional colour schemes while accommodating shifts in contemporary artistic preferences.

On the other hand, another trend in Dafang leans towards a simplified colour relationship, similar to the approach in Liangshan. The colours are used in a more straightforward manner, often with one dominant colour contrasting with auxiliary colours to create a clear visual effect. This simplified colour scheme is especially common in modern cultural and creative products, highlighting the visual impact of the dominant colour while reducing decorative details, reflecting the minimalist and clear nature of modern design.

In Dafang, the introduction of lacquerware techniques has also led to the emergence of a new trend in monochromatic lacquerware, such as Green Gem Sand lacquerware. The popularity of monochromatic lacquerware represents a shift in modern design aesthetics, moving from traditional multi-colour schemes to a focus on a single colour. This trend not only aligns with modern aesthetic preferences but also caters to both domestic and international markets that demand simple and elegant designs.

Overall, while the core colour system of the Yi ethnic group remains intact, the introduction of new colours, adjustments in colour gradation, and advancements in techniques all reflect the influence of modern design aesthetics. These changes not only enhance the decorative quality of Yi lacquerware but also help it maintain cultural relevance in a rapidly changing global cultural environment.

From the above analyses, it can be seen that the difference in the artistic characteristics of traditional lacquerware between the two regions is that the lacquerware

of the Liangshan region has a very distinctive form of ethnic uniqueness, i.e., the artistic characteristics of lacquerware contain only the artistic elements of their ethnicity. However, the lacquerware in the Dafang region has the form of an ethnic integration trend, not only the Yi ethnic but also many artistic elements from the Han ethnic and even other ethnic groups have been incorporated. The visual expression of the appearance, from the moulding to the ornamentation to the colour, the difference is very obvious.

The difference between the two regions in modern lacquerware artistic characteristics is that, in addition to the increase in the number of moulding types, the lacquerware in the Liangshan region is still based on the traditional lacquerware artistic characteristics in terms of ornamentation and colours, and the breakthroughs in innovative designs are relatively small, and the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics can be maintained with a high degree of recognizability. However, in the Dafang region, the innovative design and development of modern lacquerware are not only limited to the moulding, but also the ornamentation and colour are very good at borrowing and reconstructing, and of course, the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics will be lost accordingly.

4.2.4 Analysis of the Causes of these Differences

As shown in the previous comparative analysis, despite both Liangshan and Dafang being Yi ethnic areas and renowned lacquerware production regions, there are significant differences in the artistic characteristics (such as moulding, ornamentation, and colour) of Yi lacquerware from these two regions. Specifically, the artistic characteristics of lacquerware are not only a direct reflection of craftsmanship and technique but are deeply embedded in the cultural memory and social symbols of the respective regions.

Drawing on the Iconology theory, this section further analyses and explains the underlying reasons for these artistic characteristic differences, including geographical environment and community settlement forms, social and cultural backgrounds and religious influences, living customs and aesthetic tendencies, as well as other factors such as lacquerware production processes, individual craftsmen, local policies, and industrial development. This analysis not only helps to understand the visual features of lacquerware art but also delves into the social and cultural backgrounds behind them, revealing the profound cultural meanings of lacquerware art across different regions and historical periods.

4.2.4.1 Influence of Environment and Ethnic Groups

i. Geographical and Demographic Foundations of Yi Lacquerware Production

Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture is an autonomous prefecture under the jurisdiction of Sichuan Province of the People's Republic of China, located in the southwestern part of Sichuan Province. The state has a total area of 60,261 square kilometres, and the state's resident population consists of 2,167,808 Han Chinese (44.62%) and 2,690,551 ethnic minorities (55.38%); of these, 2,540,806 are Yi (52.3%) (Wikipedia). Liangshan Prefecture has a complex and varied landscape, with high terrain in the northwest and low in the southeast, high mountains all over, and good resources of lacquer trees, which is a material resource condition for the Yi lacquerware to be able to be inherited here for a long time. However, due to the high mountains and dense forests, canyons and rivers, it is difficult to communicate with the outside world because of the long-term traffic. There is less arable land, and agricultural production is not developed, which is one of the reasons for the economic underdevelopment of most areas in Liangshan

(Zhang, 2018).



Figure 4.58: Geographical Location Illustration of Liangshan Prefecture
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Dafang County is a county under the jurisdiction of Bijie City, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China, located in northwestern Guizhou, with an area of 3,502 square kilometres (Wikipedia). Dafang is a multi-ethnic area inhabited by 23 ethnic groups, including Han, Yi, Miao, Bai, and Gelao. According to the seventh population census, as of 00:00 on 1 November 2020, the resident population of Dafang County was 857,578 people. The landform of the county can be divided into three types of morphology: mountain, hill and river valley. The territory is rich in mineral resources, and there are also relatively abundant lacquer tree resources, which provide a material basis for the continuation of the lacquerware industry. Since ancient times, it has been an important transport hub and material distribution centre in northwest Guizhou, which also provides more convenient conditions for ethnic integration and cultural communication, as well as objective reasons that can promote the commercialisation of lacquerware (Baidu Encyclopedia).



Figure 4.59: Geographical Location Illustration of Dafang County
Source: Researcher's Illustration

ii. Socio-Geographical Foundations of Yi Lacquerware Development

The Liangshan region is a very important settlement area for the Yi ethnic group in China, and the pattern of ethnic group settlement is one of large intermingling and small gathering, i.e., the Yi ethnic group lives together in groups and is less likely to intermingle with other ethnic groups (Li, 2015).

The geographical environment of Yi lacquerware in the two places has the same place, both are rich in plant and animal resources, but also both are high mountain and canyon zones, with scarce arable land, and nomadic pastoralism was dominant in the early period. Therefore, the origin of Yi lacquerware comes from the material supply of lacquer tree resources and the daily needs of nomadic people, such as horse harnesses and tableware are directly related to the nomadic customs and living environment of the Yi people.

The two regions are also spatially divided like other Yi groups in other regions, which is a key factor contributing to the existence of many different Yi regions with large

differences in, for example, social systems, politics, language, and ideology (Wang, 2014). The fact that the residential areas of the Yi in the two regions are separated by mountains and water restricts sufficient and necessary communication between the communities and hinders the formation of a unified community identity.

Prior to 1956, the nature of Liangshan Yi society was widely regarded as slavery.Black Yi rank occupies other ranks, and among the other ranks, they also occupy each other. Moreover, there can be upward Moreover, there can be upward and downward changes in rank, making the rank relations quite complex. Apart from agriculture, other industries have not achieved significant development. Handicrafts, commerce, and so on have not yet separated from agriculture, remaining a closed and self-sufficient subsistence economy. Consequently, the level of productivity is very low. In addition, the family branch (clans of the same blood) is the form of social organisation in Liangshan Yi society (Wang, 2007). This has resulted in the long-term development of lacquer craftsmanship in this region being passed on only within a limited number of family branches, which is unfavourable to the promotion and development of Yi lacquerware.

The Shuixi (present-day Dafang) Yi are themselves a branch of the Six Ancestors of the Yi, and Dafang has traditionally been regarded as the political centre of the Shuixi Yi, with both slavery and feudalism in the Ming and Qing dynasties (Guo, 2012). Due to the differences in geography and the form of settlement of the Yi communities in the Dafang area, the magnitude and depth of ethnic integration was much greater than that of the Yi in the Liangshan area, and even much earlier in time. The trend of Yi and Han people coming and going and having cultural exchanges has never stopped, and even the trend of assimilation has become more and more obvious (Li, 2015). The

trend of ethnic integration in the Dafang region is characterised by the co-existence of pluralism and openness and monolithic closure. Pluralism lies in the fact that there are many local ethnic groups and they live together, openness lies in the compatibility of multi-ethnic cultures and customs, and singularity lies in the fact that after the formation of a certain trend of compatibility, it maintains long-term stability (during the Ming, Qing, and Republican periods), and no longer accepts on its own initiative, and is not in a position to be compatible with other cultures, due to the fact that the geography of Dafang region is still closed in general. In addition, Dafang lacquerware industry is mainly in the form of workshops for production and operation, and the inheritance of lacquerware craftsmanship is the master-apprentice system, so the lacquerware industry could flourish as early as in the Qing Dynasty.

In addition, throughout history, the Yi region not only had to engage in armed struggle with the ruling class due to its own system and interests. The family branch system also resulted in armed struggles that were often prone to occur within the Yi community (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs, 1999). The prevalence of lacquer weapons stems from this.

4.2.4.2 Influence of Culture and Religion

i. Cultural Determinants of Yi Lacquerware Aesthetics

The artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware are mainly influenced by the following cultural factors: calendar festivals, totem worship and Yi literature (myths and legends).

The Yi's October solar calendar, which uses the twelve zodiacal signs in turn to date and chronicle the year, The Yi solar calendar consists of 36 days per month, totalling 360 days in a year across ten months, and is one of the most commonly used calendars (Liu, 1986). One of the main motifs of Yi decorations, the sunburst motif, comes from the Yi solar calendar, with the sunburst in the centre and eight angular rays around it, meaning eight directions.

Regarding the moon, the Yi believe that the moon is not luminous, and the moon's roundness is related to the sun. The moon pattern in the lacquer decoration is the state of lack.

The diagram depicting the movement of the sun and moon in the Yi script literature "Cosmic Anthropology" (1984) provides a clear illustration of this astronomical phenomenon:

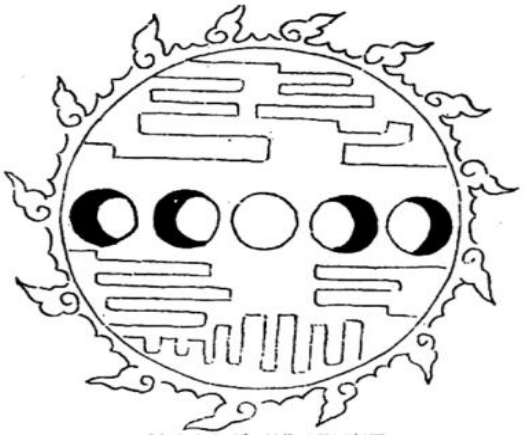


Figure 4.60: Diagram of the Sun and Moon's Movement
Source: Image is from Luo, G. Y., & Chen, Y. (Translators). (1984). Cosmic Anthropology. Ethnic Publishing House.

The Yi people believe that the concept of constellations has also existed in Yi ethnic for a long time, but it is reflected in the lacquerware as an abstract dot pattern.

In addition, in the perception of orientation, the Yi people used to divide their surroundings into eight directions, i.e. east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, north and north-east. It is called the octagonal and octagonal perception (Liu, 1986). The directional patterns in lacquer ornamentation are derived from this.

Freud (2005) states that totem culture is the link of the whole clan, sacred and inviolable, concerning religious beliefs and social relations. Liu (1985) believes that the ancestors of the Yi people came from the Tiger Totem Tribe, which worshiped the black colour and the idea of Eight Trigrams (the yin and yang fish). According to Yang (2014), the Yi people are the descendants of the flying eagle and the descendants of the dragon and the tiger. As a matter of fact, the Yi ethnic have various totems, such as dragon, tiger, yin and yang fish, etc. There are dragon patterns and yin and yang fish patterns on the Yi lacquerware, and the colour symbols are also divided into yin and yang attributes, but in the Liangshan region, the use of totem patterns on lacquerware is still very limited.

Yi literature is an important cultural component and means of transmission. It includes folk literature, which is mainly oral narratives, and canonical literature, which is written in text. The former contains a large number of Yi myths and legends, riddles and proverbs, epic poems and raps, and is the main component of Yi literature. The latter was written in Yi script by Yi literati (basically Bimo, the clergy of the Bimo religion) as well as by Han literati in Chinese characters, and covered the social aspects of the Yi area such as astronomy and geography, history and institutions, ethics and morals, medicine and divination, and so on. In the Yi region, which is heavily influenced by the Han region, the phenomenon of Yi people learning to use Chinese characters to create literary works has also emerged for a long time. From the Republic of China to the present day, there have

been a number of Yi literati (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs, 1999.) Among the Yi prose folklore, myths are the earliest to be produced and are a very important means of transmission of Yi culture, and are extremely close to primitive religions, with the creation and development of myths forming a coincidental correspondence with the creation and development of primitive religions. Myths and legends often come from religion first, and then detach from religion to form pure art forms (Kandinsky, 1977). Nature myths (myths of the opening of the heavens and the earth, myths of natural celestial phenomena, myths of plants and animals) appeared in the stage of nature worship, totem myths (myths of the origin of ancestors) appeared in the stage of totem worship, and ancestral myths (myths of heroes' ancestors, myths of the origin of culture) appeared in the stage of ancestor worship. Therefore, the intuitive influence on the artistic style of Yi lacquerware ornamentation and colour is the content of myths and legends.

The artistic characteristics of Dafang Yi lacquerware are mainly influenced by the following cultural factors: calendar and festivals, totem worship, Yi literature (myths and legends) and writing.

The Yi ethnic of Dafang also celebrate the New Year of the October Calendar (i.e. the Yi New Year) and the Torch Festival. Therefore, the October solar calendar and related lacquer ornamentation also exist. However, as this is a place where Yi, Han and other minorities live in mixed communities, the integration of Yi and Han is deep, and the Han cultural factors reflected in the artistic characteristics of lacquerware are very strong.

In addition to the dragon and tiger totems similar to those of the Liangshan region, Liu (1985) believes that the similar gourd worship united the various tribes of the

Chinese nation, forming the gourd dragon and tiger culture, reflecting the common spiritual will of the multi-ethnic groups. This is very obvious in the lacquerware types of gourd food boxes and gourd bottles from the Dafang region, and is in line with the result of the integration of local ethnic groups and cultures. Another example is the dragon and phoenix, which is a typical totem element derived from the Han Chinese.

The Dafang region is not only influenced by Yi literature, but also by Han literature, and the composite literary content gives Dafang's Yi lacquerware rich emotions, stories and cultural meanings, which makes it different from Liangshan's artistic characteristic form.

The Yi script is a kind of ideographic syllabic script, with a variety of word-making methods such as pictograms, ideograms, and references. The script played a very important role in recording and spreading the culture and history of the Yi ancestors, and besides a large number of canonical books, there are also a lot of golden inscriptions and stone carvings (Yunan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs, 1999). Therefore, the stylistic features of the characters are very similar to the unit motifs of traditional ornamentation, and there are also many representative Yi inscriptions carved in stone in Dafang, so there is a source for the appearance of this form on modern lacquerware in Dafang. However, as mentioned earlier, Yi script is still mainly a form of decoration, and the semantic connotation is actually not significant, because the language and script of the Yi people still vary greatly among different tribal groups, and it is the norm for people from outside the tribal groups to be unable to read it.

ii. Religious Influences on Yi Lacquerware Symbolism

This has led to the fact that the Yi script on lacquerware has basically become a kind of decorative pattern, with a sense of form but without semantic function.

The creation and initial standardisation of the ancient Yi script is said to have been related to Bimo, and the mystical qualities of the Bimo religion were the main driving force behind it. Many of the ancient Yi texts preserved today belong to the classics of the Bimo religion. The daily utensils and ritual utensils in traditional Yi lacquerware are more or less directly related to the doctrines of the Bimo religion. (Jiwu, interview).

Before the Liangshan region broke away from the society of slavery, the Bimo religion had a remarkable influence on the progress and spread of writing, education, history, astronomy, geography and philosophy among the Yi ethnic. In ancient societies, knowledge in these fields was integrated into the learning of the Bimo religion (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs, 1999).

The Bimo religion is a religious system that arose in the slavery society and has been a religion of universal belief for the Yi ethnic until now (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999).Wang (2007) points out that the primitive religion of the Liangshan Yi ethnic is characterised by intergenerational, universal and obligatory acceptance, which also stems from the long period of time in which this region has been in a closed ethnic group and as a result of this staticisation. In these rituals, in addition to the specialised ritual tools of the Bimo as mentioned above, there are also rituals for invoking spirits that require the use of utensils such as wooden pots (which can also be cutlery and storage for needles and threads) to hold the spirits of the dead (the Yi religion believes that the spirits of the dead are most likely to be attached

to the needles and threads) (Bamo, 2004). However, these are specialised lacquerwares with strict formal requirements, and nowadays there are basically no ground-breaking innovations for these types of wares, such as the ritual fan and the divination tube. However, since the wooden pot also serves other practical functions, innovations on it are still feasible. In addition, regarding the choice of colours for the rituals, this is because the rituals (religious doctrine) of the Bimo also use certain colours to interpret concepts and express emotions, and in this way convey the deeper cultural connotations and the essence of the subject's thoughts (Baqie, 2003). Therefore, the Yi lacquerware that maintains the most primitive appearance in terms of artistic characteristics is the instruments for Bimo's conjuration.

The Bimo religion of the Yi ethnic has gone through several stages of nature worship, animal and plant worship, ghost worship, ancestor worship, totem worship, spirit worship and idol worship (Li, 2015). This also has a relevant impact on the matrices of Yi lacquerware ornamentation. Jivu Wuqie created a hanging disc of Zhige Alu (a national hero figure of the Yi ethnic), and the figure was derived from the paintings of Bimo in the Bimo scriptures.

The Yi ethnic in the Dafang region have long been influenced by the Han religion, with Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism all exerting far-reaching influence. Even Christianity began to spread in Dafang in 1904 (Li, 2015). Beliefs in general would have changed here with the evolution of the Central Plains, and even the religion doctrine of the Bimo changed due to the introduction of the feudal system (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). Over time, the beliefs and influence of the Bimo religion declined as production and scientific knowledge continued

to develop. The artistic characteristics of lacquerware in this region were instead not overly influenced by religion.

4.2.4.3 Influence of Customs and Aesthetics

Customs here mainly refer to the lifestyles and habits of the people of the two regions, and aesthetics refers to the aesthetic concepts of national characteristics.

i. Dietary and Lifestyle Influences on Yi Lacquerware Design

Since ancient times, dietary customs have always been closely linked to their material carriers, gradually evolving into an important cultural phenomenon in human life. The dietary habits of each ethnic group are influenced by a variety of factors, and their unique characteristics map the rich connotations of the region's ethnic psychology, natural environment, production conditions and living standards, especially with the close relationship between agricultural production. The development of productivity is uneven among Yi ethnic groups in different regions (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999).

This has a great deal to do with the way the Yi people eat on a daily basis. Qiao(2004) pointed out that due to their customary practice of sitting on the ground while having meals, the Yi people craft containers with elevated and circular bases for the sake of convenience during eating.With the exception of flat-bottom bowls, the majority of Yi lacquer tableware is shaped like a Chinese word "bean"(豆).

In addition, the Yi diet includes tea, tobacco, and wine, and wine is used as a rite of passage (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). However, only the wine sets are very important, and there are many types of wine sets in

the traditional lacquerware of the Liangshan Yi ethnic.

The difference between Dafang and Liangshan in terms of tableware and wine sets is due to the change in dietary habits, which were heavily influenced by the Han Chinese, and so there are many utensils without feet that are more in line with the Han's dietary habits.

Of course, dietary habits can also create new types of wares. The tasting wine pots that appeared only in the 1980s were created because of the habit of drinking toasted wine (a circle of several or dozens of people drinking simultaneously through straws in a wine pot) among several ethnic groups in Dafang, in addition to the Yi (Xia Interview).



Figure 4.61: People Use a Tasting Pot to Drink Wine
Source: https://www.sohu.com/a/338753448_660944

Some ways of life will disappear with the times, some will remain, others will make some changes, and some will make a comeback.

The Dafang Yi lacquerware also experienced this phenomenon. In the early days, because people smoked leaf tobacco, the tobacco needed to be carried around, so the

lacquer leather tobacco case was very popular, but due to the progress of tobacco technology, everyone used to smoke paper cigarettes directly, and the lacquer leather tobacco case gradually had no market. However, nowadays, many people have begun to smoke tobacco, and the patent leather tobacco case has begun to open up the consumption situation again (Xia, Interview). Wolfring (2012) points out that art works are cyclical in form. And the modern evolution of Yi lacquerware is repeating this process.

The living customs of the Yi ethnic are still more differentiated due to regional and class differences. In most areas of Liangshan, wooden houses with pierced buckets and arched frames are used. Dafang is similar. In particular, the houses of high-class rulers are very similar to Han dwellings, with brick and wooden structures, enclosed in a courtyard form, etc. The exposed beams and arches are fond of being decorated with motifs, and cattle, sheep's heads, flowers, plants, birds, and beasts are common, with the purpose of exorcising evil spirits and praying for good luck (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). However, in basically all regions, the Yi people live with a fire pit as the centre of the house, which has become a symbol of the family, showing the prevalence of fire culture among the Yi ethnic (Hou, 2008). Nowadays, Liangshan Yi dwellings will no longer be defined by class in terms of housing hierarchy, and painted lacquered ox-head bracket sets are very prevalent, also for the purpose of warding off evil spirits and for decoration (Jiwu, Interview). However, among the Yi ethnic in Dafang, their residential customs were already basically the same as those of the Han Chinese by the time of the Republic of China (Pan, 1998).

The recreational customs of the Yi ethnic include athletics, singing and dancing, and playing musical instruments. Among them, the Moon Lute and the Mouth String are

typical Yi plucked and blown instruments, which are also exquisite handicrafts after being decorated with coloured lacquer (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). Nowadays, in the Dafang region, in addition to the Moon Lute, there are also craftsmen who make Guqin, which is a typical Han plucked instrument (Yin, 2021).

Among the Yi ethnic, cremation is practised, and there is no need to re-fill containers, as is still the case in Liangshan (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). However, the Dafang practice earth burial, which requires coffins, so lacquered coffins are very popular in this area. Cremation was introduced after the founding of the People's Republic of China, so in the 1980s and 1990s there were still a few workshops specialising in the production of lacquered urns, but now, due to the impact of foreign products, the demand for these products has dropped sharply and they are no longer being produced (Chen, interview).

Festivals and customs, the festivals of the Yi ethnic group vary greatly from place to place, but the festivals celebrated by both the Liangshan Yi and the Dafang Yi are the October New Year (Yi ethnic New Year) and the Torch Festival, both of which are seasonal festivals (Yunnan Provincial Committee of Nationalities and Religious Affairs 1999). Nowadays, due to frequent exchanges, the festivals of other ethnic groups, especially the Han Chinese, are also celebrated in the region. The Yi new year is based on the October solar calendar. The torch festival originates from the Yi people's worship of fire. It is intuitively reflected in the ornamentation and colours of lacquerware, which are expressed in the sun motif, fire striker motif and red colour.

Production customs, cultural deductions in production activities, such as fishing nets, warp and weft lines, wire frame, etc. appear as high-frequency motifs on traditional Yi lacquerware. Overall, the development of the productive forces of the Yi people was very slow due to their long history of slavery and oppression by the rulers, so the types of decorations could remain unchanged for a long period of time.

ii. The Aesthetic Evolution of Yi Lacquerware

From the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, the Yi people in the Liangshan region have an abstract aesthetic (Qiao, 2004), which is an expression of primitiveness. Whether in the moulding or in the ornamentation, the materials and renditions of the ornamentation are taken from nature and biological species. For example, animal horns (cow horns), claws (eagle claws), and limbs (pig's hooves) are taken directly to make utensils, and the animal motifs in the ornamentation are taken partially to make geometric or abstract patterns, such as the chicken intestine motif and the cow's eye motif. The pattern design of natural celestial phenomena and animal and plant motifs reflect the local primitive worship and love for natural species. But now with the development of the times, the functional and cultural aesthetics have gradually weakened (Jiwu, interview).

Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Dafang region has integrated typical Han aesthetic characteristics, as evidenced by the large number of lacquerware decorations using typical Chinese bird and flower painting patterns and auspicious allegorical motifs, which are characterised by representational aesthetics (Xia, Interview).

In addition, Yi lacquerware would co-operate with other art forms to form new visual forms. The costumes and silver jewellery patterns of the Yi regional groups overlap or are close to some of the pattern shapes of lacquerware. In modern times, such

innovations have become even more diverse. For example, a large number of creative groups of Yi folk paintings began to appear in these Yi regions, developing modern Yi lacquer paintings. The dancing scenes in the modern lacquerware figures in the decorative hanging discs are in the form of dance scenes that are in line with the classic Yi song and dance movements. Lacquerware ornamentation have also made use of calligraphy as a form of art to make innovative expressions. There are also combinations with other arts and crafts, for example, there are bamboo woven objects in Liangshan, and the use of bamboo weaving as the body is also a choice of traditional Yi lacquerware in Liangshan.

4.2.4.4 Influence of Other Factors

i. Differences between craftsmanship and individual artist's creation

From ancient times to the present, the process of lacquerware in the Liangshan region is relatively simple compared to the Dafang region, in addition to the requirements of the process standards to be lower, and now the use of basically a batch of spinning wood wood body, and less and other lacquerware craft exchanges, has been to maintain their own process. Lacquer will not be refined, the primer is also slightly rough, the pattern is full of painting is its decoration characteristics. Together with the current industrial impact, the decorative technique is now basically represented only by coloured lacquer (Jiwu, interview).

Lacquerware in the Dafang region has experienced a long period of exchange and integration with the Han Chinese region, and its process is relatively complex, and the requirements for the process are more stringent, because the stripped lacquerware is very concerned about the fit of the shape, and the lacquer layer has its own set of inspection standards. In addition, there are many decorative techniques, such as inlay, carving, texture

production and so on, all of which have different material and technical requirements (Xia, interview).

The differences in lacquer craftsmanship will directly lead to greater differences in the expression of artistic characteristics presented by lacquerware.

In terms of the types of practitioners, although both lacquerware workshops and companies continue the master-apprentice system, in Liangshan there is still a large number of lacquerware workshops and companies that are based on the master-apprentice system. However, in the Liangshan region, the Yi people are still the main craftsmen, while in the Dafang region, there have been a large number of Han craftsmen since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and nowadays, there are very few Yi craftsmen, such as the famous Yi lacquer craftsman, Gao Guangyou, who also learnt lacquer craft from Han masters in the previous Dafang state-run lacquer factory, unlike the famous Jiwu family branch in Liangshan region which has been inheriting the lacquer crafts from generation to generation. In addition, in the Dafang region, the lacquer craftsmen would be more creative, whereas the lacquer craftsmen in the Liangshan region would be more conservative in their innovations. This difference is evident in the types of lacquerware goods.

ii. Policy Guidance

In the early days, there was no governmental behaviour to guide the making of lacquerware in Liangshan, as it was all a small-scale craft based on family branch inheritance, except that it had a certain social status as a person who mastered a specialised craft (Jiwu, interview). Now in Liangshan, a special cultural bureau has been set up for crafts such as lacquerware, with corresponding skills protection and industry development. In 2022, Liangshan held a statewide cultural development conference, focusing on cultural

and creative support, with funding of about 300 million per year, of which 3-10 percent is used to support the intangible cultural heritage industry (Jiwu, Interview).

From the reign of Madame Shexiang, in the context of political and livelihood needs , guidance and support for the lacquerware industry was strengthened in the Dafang region (Tian, 1992). During the Qing Dynasty, the naturalisation policy was implemented in the region, and officials were stationed in the region to implement the direct rule of the central government. The promotion of the lacquerware industry has continued. After the founding of PRC, the national and local governments have continued to provide policy and financial support, such as the promulgation of regulations, the establishment of institutes, and allowances for inheritors. This has greatly contributed to the development of Yi lacquerware skills inheritance and the flourishing of the industry in the Dafang region (Chen, interview).

Although the government has implemented a series of positive policies to support and guide the industry in both regions, the role of these policies needs to be assessed and adjusted in depth due to the fact that the lacquer industry is facing the reality of the decline of traditional craftsmanship, and the market for lacquerware is saturated and shrinking, and the lacquerware industry has fierce competition. In the current situation, it is necessary to continue to strengthen the protection and inheritance of the traditional skills of lacquerware, and at the same time, combined with market demand, to promote the innovation and development of the lacquerware industry. Only through the continuous optimisation of policies and the development of the industry itself can the lacquerware industry usher in a more sustainable and healthy development.

iii. Industry Situation

Lacquerware production in the Liangshan region is individualised, with a limited number of people producing lacquerware, and also only during the farm slack seasons, which is a form of smallholder economy (Zhang, 2002).

In the 1950s and 1990s, lacquerware factories were set up in the state-run and collective mode of operation by governmental actions to produce tableware and furniture, which trained some professionals and created certain social benefits (Zhang, 1998). However, it also brought some disadvantages, one-sided pursuit of economic benefits, did not follow the principle of traditional craftsmanship, and introduced the harmful chemical lacquer, which is irreversible (Jiwu, interview). With the reform and opening up, Liangshan Yi lacquerware industry has ushered in a brand new development opportunity (Yan & Yang, 2021). The Yi lacquerware industry in the Liangshan region has also entered the private sector, but the product structure is still dominated by a high volume of cheap chemical lacquer tourist crafts and a small amount of traditional Yi tableware and wine sets (Zhang, 2017). Now there are close to 60 lacquerware enterprises and factories in the Liangshan region for production and operation, but the scale is not too large, no leading enterprises to play a leading role, lack of products with core competitiveness, and insufficient awareness of product innovation and development (Yang et al., 2023). Ma (2017) argues that this is related to policy support, academic protection, and talent training, and that there is an urgent need for reform and innovation from the craftsmanship to the design of lacquerware products.

The lacquerware industry in Dafang became famous very early and was large in the Ming and Qing dynasties. "Guizhou Dafang County (formerly known as Dading

County) made Dafang lacquerware, a long history, began in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, also known as leather body. Dafang lacquerware was once presented to the emperor as tribute. During the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty, Dafang lacquerware flourished for a while. At that time, almost every family in Dading County made lacquerwares, so it was known as Lacquer City" (Qiao, 2004: 132). However, during the Republic of China period, the lacquer industry began to shrink due to social instability and the country's economic backwardness.

Zhang (2013) states that the Dafang Yi lacquerware industry was salvaged and restored after the founding of PRC. Firstly, a handicraft co-operative was set up in 1956, followed by the establishment of the "State-run Dafang Lacquerware Factory" in 1958, which was an exclusive production and management model that lasted for more than thirty years, expanding the export area and creating some social benefits. During this period, Dafang learn and introduced lacquer crafts from other regions, but with the introduction and innovation of local lacquer crafts, the traditional commodities and crafts gradually declined. In the 1980s, as a result of the reform and opening-up policy, private workshops and enterprises began to increase, breaking the exclusive production and operation mode of the state-run factories, generating a large number of practitioners, and effectively preserving the inheritance of the basic lacquerware skills. However, this seemingly prosperous situation also brought about a hidden danger later on: in order to pursue economic benefits, a large number of products were produced as single-type assembly line commodities, and the visual characteristics were also mainly aimed at the commodities for the purpose of publicity, and the characteristics of lacquerware appearance were not important. This has resulted in a lack of excellent designers and craftsmen, making it difficult to promote the improvement of lacquerware craftsmanship. In addition, there is a

lack of strong supervision, which makes the market produce disorderly competition and the result of bad money expelling good money, which is extremely harmful to the long-term good development of Dafang Yi lacquerware.

Nowadays, there are only three or four lacquerware companies and workshops in Dafang that are still producing on a large scale, and the industry has mainly shifted to satisfy the tourist market and private collections, with the decorative function of lacquerware being much greater than its practical function (Xia, interview).

In fact, at the beginning of the birth of lacquerware, it was only the use of raw lacquer's anticorrosive and durable characteristics to enhance the practicality of ordinary materials for daily use. However, in the course of its development, the gradual improvement of the craftsmanship prompted the completion of its role in transforming into a luxury product, not only as a practical object, but also as a decorative object, and solidified the class of use. The common people could not afford to have lacquerware become their regular daily use or enjoyment, either social class or financial capacity. After the emergence of cheaper and more convenient alternatives, such as ceramics, the demand for lacquerware would naturally shrink drastically, and the number of consumers would also shrunk dramatically. What's more, after entering the modern industrial society, traditional lacquerware is facing even more serious challenges.

Therefore, in order to arouse the revival of the lacquerware industry, especially in ethnic minority areas, it is necessary to promote the integration of lacquerware with modern life, develop more practical and contemporary aesthetic lacquerware products, and broaden its fields of application. In addition, through publicity, promotion and cultural inheritance, the cultural connotation and historical value of lacquerware should be

enhanced to raise its visibility and reputation in the market. Considering the traditional craftsmanship and modern demands comprehensively, a new development path can be found for the lacquerware industry.

4.3 Research Results: Differences in Artistic Characteristics and Their Causes

Panofsky (1955) explored the influence of cultural, historical and social backgrounds on the meaning and value of works of art. These contextual factors determine the environment in which the artist creates, the audience's aesthetic concepts and ways of understanding, and the status and role of the work in society. Therefore, the influence of these factors needs to be taken into account when studying art works. Gombrich (1960) also pointed out that the production of art works is closely related to the individual's perception and cognitive processes, as well as to factors such as cultural, historical and social contexts. Therefore, the above factors are the deeper reasons for the formation of the differences in the visual characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions.

4.3.1 Differences in the Artistic Characteristics of Yi Lacquerware between Liangshan and Dafang

The Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang regions exhibit significant differences in colour application, form characteristics, and cultural expression. These differences are not only rooted in each region's unique cultural traditions and craft backgrounds but also reflect their distinct understandings of lacquerware design and aesthetic demands in the modernisation process.

This section responds to the first research objective by identifying the artistic differences between Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware. Through the previous comparative analysis of moulding, ornamentation, and colour, the study not only highlights

the unique regional characteristics of lacquerware in these two areas but also demonstrates the interplay between visual features and socio-cultural contexts. By employing a methodological framework that integrates visual and cultural dimensions, this research provides a valuable reference for the study of non-Western craft traditions and reveals how socio-economic changes and cultural transformations have influenced the evolution of artistic characteristics.

4.3.1.1 Moulding

i. Traditional and Innovative Inheritance in Liangshan

The Yi lacquerware from Liangshan region often emphasises the inheritance and innovation of traditional forms. In this region, traditional lacquerware designs prioritise practicality and functionality, with the shapes of the vessels grounded in long-standing customs and social structures. Notably, the round base design reflects the Yi people's dining and social habits. The lacquerware in Liangshan mainly features round and irregular shapes, reflecting the local culture's reverence for nature and animals. For example, the eagle-claw-shaped wine cup signifies respect for the eagle.

In the process of modernisation, the evolution of Liangshan lacquerware forms follows two main paths: one involves reinterpreting traditional shapes by extending proportions, repeating shapes, and refining structures, preserving the essence of traditional forms while meeting modern aesthetic needs. The other path involves imitating external design elements, incorporating styles from outside lacquerware or non-lacquerware fields, thus diversifying the shapes of Liangshan lacquerware. This change not only reflects the deep cultural traditions of Liangshan but also showcases its adaptability to external cultures and modern aesthetics.

ii. Fusion of Functionality and Aesthetics in Dafang

In contrast to Liangshan, the lacquerware from Dafang region places greater emphasis on the organic integration of functionality and aesthetics. The shapes of Dafang lacquerware break free from traditional constraints, offering more diverse designs, particularly in everyday items. These designs not only fulfil functional needs but also present unique artistic expressions. For example, the gourd-shaped leather lacquer storage box combines storage functionality with cultural symbolism of wealth and auspiciousness.

Moreover, Dafang lacquerware also incorporates geometric and biomimetic designs, such as circular, square, and elliptical shapes, highlighting precision and practicality. Simultaneously, biomimetic forms like melon seed-shaped boxes and goose-shaped containers demonstrate Dafang's imitation and innovation of natural forms. These novel forms not only showcase the artisans' flexibility in material use and craftsmanship but also reveal a sense of layering and symmetry in the design, meeting modern aesthetic demands for simple and refined shapes.

iii. Craft Innovation and Modernisation Trends in Both Regions

Although both Liangshan and Dafang exhibit different emphases in the evolution of modern lacquerware shapes, they share a common respect for traditional forms and adapt them through innovation. Liangshan focuses on continuing traditional forms, particularly incorporating modern elements into simple circular designs, while Dafang emphasises form innovation and the diversification of functions, responding to modern lifestyles.

For instance, Liangshan has innovated traditional wine vessels by increasing their height, expanding proportions, or repeating structures to create modern-looking forms while preserving traditional symbolic meanings. Dafang, on the other hand, pays more attention to multifunctional designs based on traditional forms, such as tea sets, dining sets, and home decor, which break the traditional single structure and incorporate more artistic and user-friendly features.

iv. Inheritance and Evolution of Cultural Symbols

The differences in lacquerware forms between the two regions also lie in the inheritance and evolution of cultural symbols. Liangshan's lacquerware shapes are more focused on social functions, emphasising community and social interaction needs. In everyday items, the designs often have strong social and symbolic meanings. Dafang, however, places more emphasis on form innovation and technological breakthroughs, incorporating more artistic creation and cultural expression while meeting the daily life needs of modern society, reflecting a higher level of aesthetic pursuit.

In summary, the Yi lacquerware forms from Liangshan and Dafang regions each have distinct characteristics in combining tradition and modernity. Liangshan emphasises the inheritance and re-creation of traditional culture, while Dafang showcases the unique charm of lacquerware as a fusion of modern art and traditional craftsmanship through form innovation and functional expansion.

4.3.1.2 Ornamentation

i. Abstract Geometric Features of Liangshan Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation

The traditional ornamentation of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan is primarily characterised by abstract geometric forms, focusing on simplifying and geometrically translating natural objects. These geometric styles often achieve artistic effects through symmetry, repetition, and layering organisation.

Symmetry: Primarily centre and axis symmetrical, with the former used for round or flat objects, such as decorations inside wooden bowls, and the latter for long, rectangular objects like lacquer helmets or trays.

Repetition: Continuous repetition through dot, line, or wave patterns, which combine unitary motifs into complex designs such as gourd seed patterns and fishbone motifs.

Layering Organisation: Vertical or horizontal banding patterns divide the surface of objects, creating a rich sense of depth and hierarchy.

This geometric style in Liangshan reflects the relatively isolated cultural background of the region, influenced by a long-standing slave society, resulting in a relatively singular motif vocabulary. The abstract style highlights the unique characteristics of local ethnic art.

ii. Figural and Diverse Characteristics of Dafang Yi Lacquerware Ornamentation

In contrast, the ornamentation of lacquerware from Dafang region is more figurative and diverse, incorporating various artistic styles that reflect the region's open and multicultural character.

Figurative Expression: The ornamentation often uses naturalistic techniques, with themes based on plants, animals, and human activities. The motifs usually have clear semantic meanings, such as pine needles, mountains, and auspicious patterns like dragon and phoenix or two dragons playing with a pearl.

Symbolic Expression: The use of metaphor, synecdoche, and wordplay enhances the cultural significance of the ornamentation. For example, the combination of dragon patterns and cloud-water motifs retains their independent symbolic meanings while forming an overall auspicious scene.

Technological Innovation: Dafang has borrowed craft techniques from other regions, such as eggshell inlay and spot-painted coatings, adding texture and visual impact to the ornamental patterns.

iii. Cultural Influence on Ornamentation Features

The ornamentation of Liangshan lacquerware, influenced by its long-standing isolation, retains strong ethnic characteristics and unique abstract expression. In contrast, Dafang's ornamentation features reflect a fusion of multiple ethnic cultures, presenting openness and diversity.

Liangshan focuses on the symbolic meaning of the motifs, often creating abstract beauty through repetition and composition to convey cultural symbolism. Dafang's ornamentation places more emphasis on visual expression and artistic innovation, using figurative representation as the main approach while borrowing from multiple cultural elements to break the limitations of traditional patterns.

iv. Differences in the Evolution of Modern Ornamentation

The development of modern ornamentation reflects the collision and fusion of tradition and modernity. The differences in the evolutionary paths of the two regions can mainly be seen in the following aspects:

Liangshan tends to maintain the integrity of the symbolic meaning while innovating in form. For example, the traditional gourd seed pattern evolves into a four-petaled flower motif, where the form changes but the cultural meaning remains intact.

Dafang, on the other hand, pays more attention to the diversification of artistic expression and the richness of technological methods. By incorporating foreign elements and innovative techniques, Dafang has created a unique regional style, such as the use of Yunnan-style flat decorative figures.

In comparison of traditional and modern ornamentation, the Yi lacquerware from Liangshan and Dafang regions present a stark contrast between abstract and figurative, closed and open, inheritance and innovation. This difference is not only an artistic stylistic divide but also a deep reflection of the cultural backgrounds and ethnic integration in both regions.

4.3.1.3 Colour

i. Contrasts in Traditional Colour Usage

Yi lacquerware from Liangshan predominantly uses black, red, and yellow as the main colours, emphasising the deep connection between colour and the natural world and cosmology. Black, as the base colour, symbolises the stability and inclusiveness of the earth; red represents the vitality of fire; yellow signifies beauty and vitality. This colour combination, often framed by black, creates a strong sense of order and visual balance, reflecting the Yi cultural philosophy of yin-yang harmony.

In contrast, Dafang lacquerware further expands on traditional colour schemes, incorporating a five-colour palette dominated by black, red, yellow, green (blue-green), and white. The use of gold, in particular, not only enhances the luxuriousness of the decoration but also carries a symbolic meaning of blessing. This diverse colour combination provides a broader expressive space for Dafang lacquerware, establishing a closer connection with the decorative themes.

ii. Diverging Trends in Modern Colour Evolution

Modern lacquerware in Liangshan continues to use traditional colour tones, while introducing some decorative modern colours, such as brighter metallic tones or low-saturation transition colours. However, overall, the colour innovation in modern Liangshan lacquerware is relatively conservative, with a stronger focus on maintaining the integrity of cultural identity and ensuring that the visual appearance remains consistent with traditional lacquerware.

Dafang's modern lacquerware, however, presents two prominent trends. On the one hand, some designs continue the traditional five-colour palette but incorporate innovative techniques to enrich the gradient and soft colour expressions, making the works more aligned with contemporary art aesthetics. On the other hand, Dafang is beginning to explore new directions with single-colour lacquerware, such as the rise of "green gem sand" craftsmanship. This simplified colour design language not only reflects the influence of the "minimalist style" in international aesthetics but also demonstrates stronger market adaptability in cultural creative products.

iii. Advancement Driven by Material and Technological Development

Liangshan's traditional colour materials are primarily natural pigments, and the practicality and economy of these materials limit the complexity of decorations. However, this also results in the pure and simple aesthetic of Liangshan lacquerware. In contrast, Dafang, due to advancements in material resources and craftsmanship, can utilise more expensive decorative materials, such as gold and silver, and employ colour layering and craftsmanship improvements to achieve more delicate decoration effects. Technological progress has not only propelled colour diversification but also enabled the realisation of more intricate decorative patterns.

iv. Differences in Cultural Connotation and Aesthetic Value

The colour system in Liangshan is more closely linked to the ethnic spirit and philosophical beliefs, emphasising the deep relationship between colour and cultural faith. This colour usage method is highly localised and culturally unique, with modern designs maintaining a strong recognisability.

In Dafang, through the integration of multiple cultures, a colour aesthetic blending traditional and modern features has gradually formed. Its colour designs, while incorporating artistic elements from other ethnicities, present a more inclusive visual language. Although this somewhat weakens the ethnic characteristics, it makes the works more marketable and contemporary in value.

Liangshan lacquerware showcases a strong ethnic character and artistic tension through its minimalist and symbolic colour traits, while Dafang lacquerware, with its diverse colour choices and bold modern transformations, expands the expressive power and adaptability of lacquerware in design fields.

From the above analyses, it can be seen that the difference in the artistic characteristics of traditional lacquerware between the two regions is that the lacquerware of the Liangshan region has a very distinctive form of ethnic uniqueness, i.e., the artistic characteristics of lacquerware contain only the artistic elements of their ethnicity. However, the lacquerware in the Dafang region has the form of an ethnic integration trend, not only the Yi ethnic but also many artistic elements from the Han ethnic and even other ethnic groups have been incorporated. The visual expression of the appearance, from the moulding to the ornamentation to the colour, the difference is very obvious.

The difference between the two regions in modern lacquerware artistic characteristics is that, in addition to the increase in the number of moulding types, the lacquerware in the Liangshan region is still based on the traditional lacquerware artistic characteristics in terms of ornamentation and colours, and the breakthroughs in innovative designs are relatively small, and the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics can be maintained with a high degree of recognizability. However, in the Dafang region, the

innovative design and development of modern lacquerware are not only limited to the moulding, but also the ornamentation and colour are very good at borrowing and reconstructing, and of course, the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics will be lost accordingly.

4.3.2 Summary of the Causes of These Differences

This section aims to explore the underlying causes of the artistic differences in Yi lacquerware between Liangshan and Dafang, directly addressing the second research objective. Building on the comparative analysis of artistic characteristics presented in the previous section, this section delves deeper into the environmental, social, and cultural factors shaping these differences, employing Iconology theory and contextual analysis methods. By incorporating these factors into the analysis, the study uncovers the deeper origins of the artistic differences and illustrates how regional environments and historical developments intertwine to influence the evolution of lacquerware art. These research results also lay a solid foundation for subsequent discussions on the theoretical and practical contributions of this research.

4.3.2.1 Geographic Environment and Ethnic Group Differences

Firstly, the geographic environments of Liangshan and Dafang share similarities, both being located in mountainous and canyon areas with abundant lacquer tree resources. However, due to limited transportation conditions, Liangshan is relatively isolated, which has led to the inheritance of lacquerware art primarily through family traditions, with a more closed development. In contrast, Dafang, being in a more open geographical location, has seen more frequent exchanges between ethnic groups, leading to the commercialization

of lacquerware craftsmanship and broader cultural integration, particularly with the Han ethnic group.

Secondly, the social structure of the Yi in Liangshan is more complex, with a long history of being family-based, where the level of social productivity was relatively low, thus limiting the transmission of lacquerware craftsmanship. In Dafang, the Yi people have had a more diversified ethnic mix for centuries, and the inheritance of lacquerware craftsmanship has predominantly been through the master-apprentice system, significantly influenced by external cultures. The development of lacquerware art in Dafang has become more mature in both folk and commercial aspects.

Therefore, the differences in geographic environment and ethnic groups, along with the distinct historical and social development paths of the two regions, have influenced the differences in Yi lacquerware art characteristics. These factors not only shaped the unique styles of lacquerware in each region but also reveal how ethnic culture and social changes deeply affect the evolution of artistic forms.

4.3.2.2 Cultural and Religious Influences

Firstly, the Yi lacquerware art in Liangshan is deeply influenced by Yi traditional festivals, totem worship, and Yi literature (myths and legends). Elements such as the Yi solar calendar, totem patterns of the sun and moon, and the directional concepts of the eight cardinal points are reflected in the lacquerware decoration, closely tied to Yi cultural traditions, particularly in the use of decoration and colours. Additionally, the Yi lacquerware in Liangshan is significantly influenced by the Bimo religion, especially in the design of sacrificial utensils, where strict forms and colour choices reflect the deeper cultural connotations of the Bimo religion.

In Dafang, Yi lacquerware art is not only influenced by similar elements such as the solar calendar, totem worship, and Yi literature but is also deeply affected by Han culture. Dafang is a multi-ethnic area, and the integration of Yi and Han cultures is more profound. This influence is especially evident in the lacquerware decoration and forms, which incorporate more Han elements, such as dragon and phoenix totems and gourd patterns. This cultural fusion endows the Yi lacquerware from Dafang with richer emotional and cultural connotations, distinguishing it from the artistic style of Liangshan.

Furthermore, lacquerware art in Dafang is also influenced by Chinese characters and Han culture, particularly in the use of decorative texts. While Yi script is present, it is mostly used as a decorative pattern rather than serving a clear semantic function, which differs from the use of Yi script in Liangshan, where it plays a more significant role in religious and cultural transmission.

Overall, cultural and religious factors play a crucial role in the formation of the differences in Yi lacquerware art characteristics between Liangshan and Dafang. In Liangshan, lacquerware art is deeply influenced by traditional religion and mythology, maintaining a more primitive artistic style, while in Dafang, the lacquerware reflects a more diversified and integrative artistic character due to the fusion of multiple ethnic groups and Han culture.

4.3.2.3 Differences in Customs and Aesthetics

i. Differences in Dietary Customs

Dietary habits are closely related to local culture and production methods. There are significant differences in the dietary habits between Liangshan and Dafang, directly

influencing lacquerware production. For instance, the Yi people in Liangshan, who habitually sit on the ground while eating, create lacquerware predominantly in the shape of beans, while the Yi in Dafang, influenced by Han dietary customs, tend to use vessels without bases. Additionally, new types of lacquerware, such as "wine-pouring pots," have appeared in Dafang due to changes in local drinking customs. The forms and functions of lacquerware have evolved with lifestyle changes, reflecting regional differences in daily habits.

ii. Differences in Living Habits and Housing Culture

The living culture and production habits of the Yi in Liangshan and Dafang also differ. The Yi in Liangshan still maintain a relatively primitive lifestyle, living in houses made of wood and bamboo, with a strong emphasis on "fire culture." Lacquerware is often used for cultural purposes, such as warding off evil and praying for blessings. In contrast, the Yi in Dafang have already integrated with Han-style brick-and-wood houses, and their living and decorative styles are more influenced by Han elements.

iii. Influence of Festivals and Production Customs

Both regions of the Yi celebrate traditional festivals such as the October New Year and the Torch Festival. However, due to geographic and cultural differences, the manifestations of these festivals differ. For example, the fire worship in the Torch Festival is more prominent in Liangshan, with lacquerware decorations often featuring sun and flame elements, while Dafang is more influenced by Han culture, and lacquerware decorations commonly include auspicious patterns of birds, animals, and flowers.

iv. Differences in Aesthetic Concepts

Yi lacquerware in Liangshan tends to exhibit more primitive and abstract aesthetic characteristics, with decorations often focused on natural phenomena, plants, and animals, emphasizing nature worship and reverence for biological species. In contrast, lacquerware from Dafang incorporates more Han aesthetic elements, such as bird and flower patterns and symbols of good fortune, presenting a more figurative and symbolic aesthetic style.

In conclusion, the differences in Yi lacquerware art characteristics between Liangshan and Dafang are influenced not only by dietary customs, lifestyle, and housing culture but also by festival traditions, production practices, and deeply rooted aesthetic concepts. These cultural differences are fully reflected in the forms, decorations, and functions of lacquerware.

4.3.2.4 Other Influencing Factors

i. Craftsmanship Differences and Individual Creativity

Lacquerware craftsmanship in Liangshan is relatively simple, focusing on decoration and the use of natural materials, emphasizing the richness of decoration. In contrast, lacquerware craftsmanship in Dafang is more complex, with strict requirements and various decorative techniques, including inlaying and carving. Craftsmen in Dafang are more influenced by Han culture, showing greater innovation and diversity, and exhibiting more artistic creativity. In contrast, craftsmanship in Liangshan remains conservative and traditional, with most craftsmen being Yi people, while in Dafang, a large number of Han craftsmen work in lacquerware production.

ii. Policy Guidance

The differences in the lacquerware industries of Liangshan and Dafang are also due to variations in policy guidance. Liangshan lacked government support in the past, with lacquerware production primarily being passed down through family traditions. It is only in recent years that specialized cultural bureaus have been established to protect and develop the craft. In comparison, Dafang's lacquerware industry has received government support, particularly after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, where policies were implemented to support lacquerware production, setting up factories and providing skill preservation, thus promoting the development of the industry.

iii. Industry Situation

The lacquerware industry in Liangshan is relatively small, with production mainly concentrated in the off-season, and it is an individual-based craft. The variety and quality of the products are relatively simple, with most items being inexpensive souvenirs for tourists. In contrast, Dafang's lacquerware industry was once prosperous and went through a period of state-owned production from the 1950s to the 1990s. Although the industry in Dafang now faces challenges such as market shrinkage and intense competition, its foundation in industrialization and commercialization remains solid.

iv. Modernization and Market Demand

The modernization process and changes in market demand have posed significant challenges to the traditional lacquerware industry. With the emergence of cheaper and more convenient substitutes (such as ceramics), the demand for traditional lacquerware has gradually declined, shrinking the consumer base. Most lacquerware

products now cater to the tourism market and private collections. To address this dilemma, the industry must innovate its designs, combining lacquerware with modern life and contemporary aesthetics, developing more practical and modern lacquerware products, while also promoting its cultural value to increase market recognition.

In conclusion, the differences in lacquerware between Liangshan and Dafang are influenced by not only traditional craftsmanship and cultural backgrounds but also by policy support, craft innovation, market demand, and other factors. For the sustainable development of the lacquerware industry, it is essential to preserve and pass on traditional craftsmanship while pushing for innovation that aligns with modern needs and finding a path that adapts to the contemporary market.

4.4 Research Findings on the Application of Yi Lacquerware's Artistic Characteristics in Modern Art Design

Intangible cultural heritage refers to "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills-as well as instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces" that have been "transmitted from generation to generation," are "constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history," and provide "an opportunity to learn from the experiences of their peers", their history," and provide "a sense of identity and continuity" (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2003, p. 2). Currently, the art form of Yi lacquerware is protected in China as a typical intangible cultural heritage. As the history of art and culture has verified, artworks of the past and present are often burdened with a variety of meanings such as informational, communicative and symbolic expressions (Kandinsky, 1977). However, the real situation is that many practical arts have retained only their ornamental value throughout their long evolution, and Yi lacquerware is in such

a situation.

The industry has now developed a general understanding that Yi lacquerware can only continue to be passed on through a sustainable development path. This study argues that the so-called sustainable development refers to supporting traditional craftsmen to achieve sustainable business through innovative design, drawing on modern art design modes of thinking, while protecting the ecological and humanistic environment. This includes the development of cultural and creative products with local cultural identifiers, and the continuous improvement of the creative process and craftsmanship in order to achieve economic profitability, enhance economic status, and maintain the sustainability of the circular development model (Li et al., 2019).

Against this backdrop, this chapter examines the modern application of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics, with a particular focus on the role of Design-Driven Innovation (DDI) as a guiding framework. By integrating DDI, the study explores how traditional symbols can be redefined to meet contemporary design demands, thereby bridging the gap between heritage preservation and market relevance. Specifically, the chapter delves into how DDI can provide insights for reinterpreting cultural identifiers within Yi lacquerware, connecting them to contemporary social practices and creating sustainable development opportunities for the industry.

By combining the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware with modern art design, not only can the unique value of traditional culture be effectively utilised, but its connection with contemporary social practices can also be maintained. This innovative design application revitalises Yi lacquerware in terms of aesthetics and cultural heritage while identifying a wider range of application scenarios for it in contemporary society.

Furthermore, Design-Driven Innovation offers a systematic method to uncover latent symbolic meanings within traditional Yi lacquerware and reshape these elements into design features that align with the needs and aesthetics of modern consumers.

4.4.1 The Relationship between Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics and Modern Art Design

In the past, craftspeople were direct to the consumer and the form of consumption was fixed, but the changing user needs of today's society require a shift from traditional to modern to adapt to modern lifestyles (Kaur & Bahl, 2018). The need to apply design knowledge to address the challenges of local industrial revitalisation is just inevitable (Tung, 2012). It is the trend and future of Yi lacquerware to survive and develop in today's society by generating design strategies and forming a sustainable model through the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware by making connections with modern art design.

However, while embracing this trend, we must face up to the dilemmas faced by Yi lacquerware in the application of modern art design.

Firstly, the cultivation of traditional lacquerware talents is still stuck in the master-apprentice system, which requires years of repetitive labour to accumulate experience, while there is a relative lack of talents with design thinking. Even now, the production of lacquerware has formed a kind of assembly line, and Aga (interview) mentioned that they only do the colour painting, but not the other processes, not to mention the design innovation, because the design quality of the practitioners is basically impossible to talk about. So it can be seen that placing the inheritance of Yi lacquerware only on the craftsmanship is insufficient (Zhan & Walker, 2019).

Secondly, taking the current Liangshan Yi lacquerware as an example, the extent of its commercialisation is very serious. A large number of cheap tourist product types have been produced in pursuit of profit, and the so-called innovative design is just going to repeat the original artistic elements in different carriers, without exquisite craftsmanship or lack of scientific design projection.

Thirdly, Yi lacquerware, as a folk craft, has artistic characteristics with localised regionalised attributes, and it is extremely difficult to break through the regional restrictions to promote and be recognised by a wider range of consumers (Zhan & Walker, 2019). Addressing these issues requires a more systematic and comprehensive strategy. Soares et al. (2016) suggested that design still has the ability to stimulate traditional crafts into new materialised representations of a people's culture. Li et al. (2019) also suggested that the discipline of design is an effective mediator connecting natural disciplines and the humanities, and that it is through scientific design that traditional crafts can be promoted. Currently, handicrafts show outstanding functions, application areas and economic utilisation, while highlighting the cultural genes and cultural values embedded in them.

In this regard, Jiwu Wuga (interview), who is the inheritor, also explicitly suggests that in order to better pass on the artistic tradition of Yi lacquerware, it is necessary not only to introduce modern art design concepts in order to break through the limitations of lacquerware innovation, but also to allow other fields of modern art design to fully utilise the artistic characteristics and visual elements of Yi lacquerware. Therefore, in addition to the modern art design innovation of Yi lacquerware itself, making full use of its unique artistic characteristic elements for cross-border design is also a positive application strategy. This way of thinking helps to integrate the artistic language of Yi lacquerware

into a wider range of modern art design fields, expand the application scenarios of lacquerware, and promote its wider recognition and dissemination in modern art design.

Therefore, this study advocates the existence of a two-way relationship between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and the application of modern art design. On the one hand, it is necessary to explore how to apply the knowledge in the field of modern art design to Yi lacquerware design, so that it can bring out new artistic charms in contemporary society. On the other hand, it is also necessary to study how other modern art design disciplines can apply the knowledge theme of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristic elements to expand these art design disciplines. Through an in-depth study of the visual artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, we can explore the possibility of integrating its visual elements into graphic design, spatial design, product design and other modern art design fields. This kind of cross-disciplinary research can help to better understand and pass on the Yi lacquerware culture, and give these elements new contexts and meanings in modern art design, expanding the innovative applications of these art design disciplines.

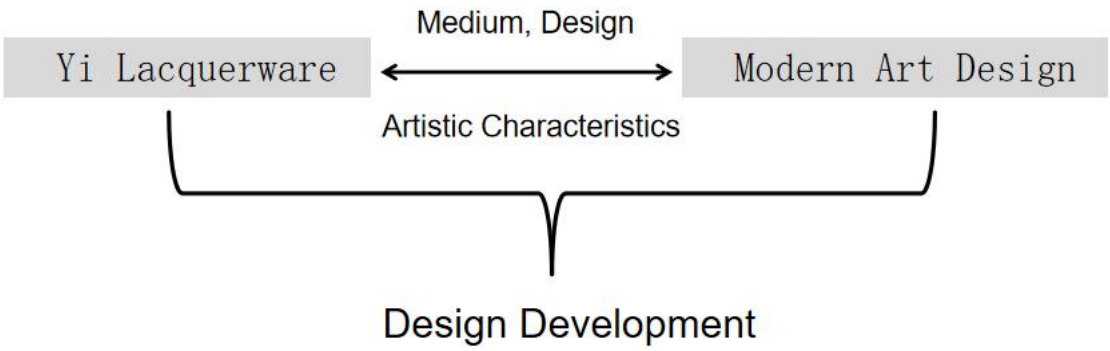


Figure 4.62: The Relationship between Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics and Modern Art Design Applications
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Only by considering these two aspects comprehensively can a more perfect and meaningful design application strategy be formulated. The study of this two-way knowledge transfer relationship helps to deeply understand the interaction mechanism between Yi lacquerware and modern art design, and provides a more systematic and comprehensive guidance for promoting Yi lacquerware inheritance and innovation.

4.4.2 Successful Integration and Case Study

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the specific situation of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern application mode and to propose detailed and reasonable design strategy suggestions, this study, inspired by the principles of Design-Driven Innovation, will use actual and specific cases as empirical materials for in-depth analysis, so as to construct theories and strive to draw conclusions with guiding significance. These selected cases are based on the interviews conducted by the researcher while conducting the fieldwork, which may have some limitations in terms of quantity and scope. However, this methodology will help to grasp more comprehensively the actual situation of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design applications, and provide more specific guiding directions for future research and practice.

The United Nations has repeatedly emphasised the crucial role of culture, education and innovation in achieving a sustainable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable life. Innovation that draws on cultural diversity can foster high value-added industries and enhance economic productivity. There is a need to continuously improve production activities and innovations to activate local cultures more deeply and drive the development of product innovations (Li et al., 2019). Based on this, this study argues that the application of modern art design of Yi lacquerware should be based on Yi culture and the artistic

characteristics of Yi lacquerware. Firstly, the knowledge of these elements must be satisfied in order to clarify the design objectives. Secondly, the development of modern art design application of Yi lacquerware implies the completion of innovative design conception by recombining different cultural and artistic elements. Finally, the design case obtained from the application of modern art design of Yi lacquerware needs to be presented in an interpretative way to deeply convey the cultural connotation assumed by the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware. The case study will be closely centred on the design goal - understanding, design conception - restructuring and design communication - interpretation, providing a powerful theoretical construction for the subsequent design strategy.

i. Application of Modern Art Design Methods in the Innovative Design of Yi Lacquerware

Craftsmanship is a way of presenting the unique expression of culture and community through skills, techniques, and materials. In traditional contexts, artisans are often makers-cum-designers; the concepts of art, craft, and design are closely linked to each other (Kaur & Bahl, 2018). The only known cases of dedicated design departments or designers in lacquerware industry companies in the two regions are the lacquerware companies of Qumu Family in Liangshan and Gao Guangyou in Dafang, but the former only has collaborating designers in an irregular capacity, and their design work is not centred on lacquerware. The latter has set up a specialised design department with two designers with professional design backgrounds, while training a design team. Specialised designers in the lacquer industry are extremely scarce, and most of the time they are taken on by the very experienced craftsmen themselves. Lacquerware craftsmen basically

continue the role of makers and designers, especially the famous old lacquerware artists, such as Jiwu Wuqie in Liangshan, Gao Guangyou and Xia Minglang in Dafang, and the young lacquerware artists who have received higher education in modern times, such as Jivu Wuga in Liangshan and Gao Yan in Dafang.

Practical function and aesthetic value, as well as modern characteristics that evolve with the changing times, make it necessary to explore the expression and dissemination of craft culture in the context of modern design from the research perspective of design (Wu, 2021).

However, in practice there are two big problems of cooperation between designers and craftsmen, one is the realisation of the design vision and the other is the poor communication. The lacquer workshop of Qumu Shiwu's family collaborated with a professional designer, but due to differences in collaboration and lack of necessary in-person communication because they were not located in the same region, the collaborative research and development was finally terminated. At present, her family still focuses on the production of traditional Yi lacquerware, and does not consider the development of new lacquerware for the time being. Gao Guangyou's lacquerware company has a special R & D department, focusing on the training of specialised design talents, his son is a professionally educated designer, belonging to both know the craftsmanship and design of the composite talents, there is also a specialised designer hired, but also a long time stationed in the production of the first site, know the basic lacquerware technology, in order to timely and good communication with the craftsmen in order to achieve the perfect combination of design and craftsmanship.

Case 1: Mulong Painted Lacquer Plate



Figure 4.63: Mulong Painted Lacquer Plate
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Yi lacquerware designer and maker Jiwu Wuqie is currently the only state-level inheritor of the Yi lacquerware painting technique in Liangshan, China. He is an advocate of modern innovation in Yi lacquerware, and at the same time practices this philosophy to promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware.

The modern design of the Mulong painted lacquer plate (Mulong is the name of a kind of eagle in the Yi legend) created by Jiwu Wuqie lies in the breakthrough of the theme of the ornamentation. The main pattern is based on the content of the Yi totem worship legend, the image of the eagle is exaggerated and restructured with other animal forms, while the feathers of the eagle are replaced with the traditional Yi dress, successfully breaking the traditional Yi lacquer ornamentation limited to the expression of the theme of local animal patterns. This innovative idea establishes a new paradigm of animal pattern, highlighting the clever integration of Yi cultural elements. This design not

only enriches the expression of Yi lacquerware, but also injects modern aesthetic concepts into traditional culture, demonstrating a clever fusion of tradition and modernity.

Table 4.2： Mulong coloured Lacquer Plate Design Case Analysis

<table>
<tr><th>Design
objective-understanding</th><th>Design
conception-reorganisation</th><th>Design
expression-interpretation</th></tr>
<tr><td>Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics:
The stylistic choices of ornamentation and colour scheme are consistent with the traditional forms.</td><td rowspan="2">Inherited elements:
Traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation;
Black, red and yellow colour scheme;
Yi eagle totem worship culture.

Innovative design:
The core lies in breaking through the limitations of the traditional patterns of Yi lacquerware and creating a new ornamental motif ;
Establishing a complete animal pattern and creating the characteristics of the eagle pattern;
The use of bionic and associative methods in modern design composition.
Redefining cultural symbols: Leveraging the eagle totem worship theme, the design reinterprets traditional motifs by merging Yi mythology with modern artistic narratives, aligning with DDI principles.</td><td rowspan="2">New context and application scenario:
Visual artistic representation of the Yi cultural message of Eagle Totem Worship;
Decorative applications.

Meaning:
By breaking through the limitations of traditional Yi lacquerware patterns and creating a complete animal motif, and using the eagle totem worship as the basis of creation, the visual artistic expression of Yi cultural information is realised. The new context conveyed by this design is not only an innovation of tradition, but also a profound inheritance of cultural connotations, opening up new possibilities for the development of Yi lacquerware in modern design.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Modern design applications:
Creation of new ornamentation by restructuring of modern compositional forms.

moulding:
Flat decorative moulding.
Ornamentation:
Innovative theme pattern as the central main picture, traditional Yi lacquerware motifs as the auxiliary pattern.
Colour:
Black is the basic colour, red and yellow are the ornamentation colours.</td></tr>
</table>

Case 2: Coloured Lacquer Tea Set



Figure 4.64: Painted Ceramic Tea Set
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

This set of coloured tea set designed and produced by Jiwu Wuqie is a case study of cooperation with a green pottery base in Huili County, under the jurisdiction of Liangshan. In this case, the teapots are based on the pottery produced at the Green Pottery Base, with reference to the typical characteristics of Han Chinese tea wares. He was involved in the design and production of only the ornamentation painting, and the innovation of the modern design application is that he cleverly integrated the Yi lacquerware visual art elements into the Han tea sets mouldings, reaching a way of combining the Yi and Han cultures. In addition to the reorganised use of traditional lacquerware motifs, the ornamentation also combines Yi dress motifs, such as the Eight Treasures motif, and the overall composition of the patterns is simplified, with an emphasis on the contrast between lines and surfaces. The use of colour is particularly striking, adopting the traditional black and red colour scheme of the Yi, which is a clever echo of the traditional lacquerware colour scheme of the Han, and a good blend of the ethnic

artistic characteristics of the Han and Yi. This innovation not only retains the characteristics of the traditional tea sets, but also shows the unique cultural connotation of the Yi, forming a unique tea set form design that integrates the Han and Yi cultures.

Table 4.3： Painted Ceramic Tea Set Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: The retention of ornamentation and colour scheme forms a unique regional artistic characteristics.	Inherited elements: Traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation; Black and red colour scheme.	New context and application scenario: The clever fusion of modern aesthetic visual effects and traditional Yi artistic characteristics, highlighting ethnic and regional characteristics; Practical tea set.
Modern design applications: Combination with pottery craft; Integration and re-creation with Han tea ware types; Compositional form simplicity, emphasising the line and surface structure of the pattern. Redefining cultural symbols: By blending the traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation and Han tea set moulding, the design redefines cultural expressions of both ethnic groups. This approach aligns with DDI principles, demonstrating how cultural heritage can inspire innovative forms and cross-cultural aesthetic integration.	Innovative design: The core lies in the minimalist treatment; Combination of traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation and Yi dress motifs, and regular ordering arrangement with geometrical linear ornamentation; The contrast between large plain surface and small area of linear ornamentation; The black and red colour scheme of the colours makes the traditional Yi lacquerware echo the colour scheme of the traditional Han lacquerware.	Meaning: Through the clever fusion of Han tea set moulding and Yi lacquerware ornamentation, the tea set design is able to take on a richer and more unique look. The new context conveyed by this design is not only an innovation of tradition, but also a profound inheritance of cultural connotations, opening up new possibilities for the development of Yi lacquerware in modern design.
moulding: Typical Han tea set moulding. Ornamentation: Modern composition form of traditional Yi lacquerware		

Table 4.3 continued

ornamental motifs. Colour: Black is the base colour, red is the ornamentation colour.		

Case 3: Painted Lacquer Moon Lute



Figure 4.65: Hand-Painted Lacquer Moon Lute
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

The designer and maker of Yi lacquerware, Jiwu Wuga, is the provincial representative inheritor of Liangshan Yi lacquerware painting techniques, and is also a representative figure of modern Yi lacquerware innovation in the Liangshan region. The innovation point of the modern design of this painted lacquer Moon Lute lies in the moulding and ornamentation. In the shape of the instrument, he subverted reversed the traditional full round shape, and created a sense of asymmetry and hierarchy through the spatial depression treatment of one side of the body, highlighting the meaning of the modern shape of the instrument. This treatment breaks the traditional shape of the Moon Lute and injects it with more modern aesthetic features.

The main pattern on the body of the instrument is reconstructed on the basis of the traditional fire striker motif and spring source motif, forming a heart-shaped combination of patterns. The innovative use of this ornamentation highlights the reinterpretation and integration of traditional elements, injecting new life and meaning into the lacquerware pattern. This heart-shaped combination of motifs is not only unique and artistic, but also reflects the designer's deep understanding of traditional culture and creative expression. In order to emphasize the main pattern, red and yellow are chosen as the ornamentation colours, and the clever combination of black, red, yellow and wood colour adds rich colour layers to the lacquer Moon Lute, making it more visually impactful and artistic. This series of innovative design makes the lacquer Moon Lute not only a traditional musical instrument, but also an artwork with modern aesthetic value and cultural connotation. This innovative lacquerware design provides a powerful example for the inheritance and development of traditional culture, and at the same time injects new vitality into the field of modern art design.

Table 4.4： Hand-Painted Lacquer Moon Lute Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: The shape of the moulding is similar to that of the traditional moulding, and the stylistic choices of the ornamentation and colour scheme are consistent with the traditional forms.	Inherited elements: Traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation; Black, red and yellow colour scheme; Yi moon worship culture.	New context and application scenario: Visual artistic representation of the moon's roundness information in Yi culture; Performances, festival occasions, and also decorative applications.
Modern design applications: Modern compositional idiosyncratic forms and reconstructed forms of innovation in moulding and ornamentation.	Innovative design: The core lies in breaking through the complete symmetrical modelling of traditional Yi lacquerware, and deformed space treatment;	Meaning: By innovating the asymmetrical shape and composite ornamentation of traditional Yi lacquerware, it presents a more modern design

Table 4.4 continued

The use of asymmetry and recombined motifs demonstrates how DDI guides the process of integrating modern and traditional elements to create a new design language.	Recombination of ornamentation based on the traditional Yi lacquerware ornamental motif. Redefining cultural symbols: The innovative reconfiguration of traditional Yi ornamentation into a modern context reflects how DDI principles can drive cultural reinterpretation and aesthetic fusion.	form, forming a layered design. This not only meets the contemporary aesthetic demand, but also presents the information of the moon's roundness in Yi culture in artistic expression, giving a new visual art interpretation to the traditional culture.
moulding: Asymmetrical moulding type. Ornamentation: Innovative composite ornamentation as the main pattern, traditional Yi lacquerware motif as the		
auxiliary pattern. Colour: Black is the basic colour, red and yellow are the ornamentation colours of the decoration, blending with the wood colour.		

Case 4: Monochrome Lacquer Tea Tray



Figure 4.66: Monochrome Lacquer Tea Tray
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

The monochrome lacquer tea tray designed and produced by Jiwu Wuga presents a number of innovations in modern design applications. Firstly, in terms of the

moulding, he borrowed the form of Han Chinese tray and adopted the design of a square, footless shallow tray, incorporating elements of Han Chinese related ware and showing the characteristics of cross-cultural design. Secondly, in terms of ornamentation, he chose to base his work on geometrically clear patterns such as the comb motif, the fingernail motif and the garlic clove motif, which are the main motifs of traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation, and made appropriate exaggerated deformation, so as to make the proportions of the pattern and the form of the composition more modern, highlighting the individuality and innovativeness of the design. The most important innovation lies in the design of colours, Jiwu Wuga is painted in a single shade of green. This design not only breaks through the traditional Yi lacquerware inherent pattern of three-colour matching, but also presents a modern sense of monochrome pattern, making the overall design more modern atmosphere. This innovation not only makes the monochrome lacquer tea tray more aesthetically contemporary, but also opens up a new way of thinking for the modern design of Yi lacquerware shades.

Table 4.5： Monochrome Lacquer Tea Tray Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: The style choice of the ornamentation is consistent with the traditional form.	Inherited elements: Design concept of utility ware; Traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation, the combination of main pattern plus auxiliary pattern.	New context and application scenario: The attempt of modern minimalist colour style; Utility ware, but also home decoration applications.
Modern design applications: Modern compositional idiosyncratic forms and reconstructed forms of innovation in moulding and ornamentation. The monochrome treatment and reconfiguration of	Innovative design: The moulding is directly based on modern form; The pattern is combined with proportional changes; Breaking away from the traditional three-colour colour	Meaning: The use of colour breakthrough makes Yi lacquerware take on a new life in modern art design, highlighting the culture of the times.

Table 4.5 continued

ornamentation reflect the principles of DDI by integrating tradition with contemporary design language, showcasing how modern design can infuse traditional craft with new meaning.	scheme and using a green monochrome treatment to present a minimalist colour effect. Redefining cultural symbols: The design challenges traditional colour schemes and reinterprets Yi lacquerware ornamentation to fit modern aesthetic needs, demonstrating how DDI can guide cultural innovation.	
moulding: Symmetrical moulding. Ornamentation: Symmetrical pattern based on traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation. Colour: Bold and innovative use of green as a monochrome, forming a sharp contrasting colour relationship with the original colour of the lacquerware body.		

Case 5: Cultural and Creative Product Design of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Development Co.



Figure 4.67: Cultural and Creative Product Series of Lacquerware
Source: Photos provided by Gao

Founded in July 2013 and expanded in April 2016 to become Dafang Gao Guang Yi Lacquerware Development Co., Ltd, Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Development Co., Ltd. is one of the most well-developed professional lacquerware companies in the lacquerware industry in the two regions, and is also the only Yi lacquerware production company known to have set up a design office. Its outstanding performance in the research and development and production of lacquerware craftsmanship has played a positive role in promoting the enhancement of the local lacquerware industry and the inheritance of lacquerware culture, and has injected new vitality into the local economy.

The founder, Gao Guangyou, is the provincial representative inheritor of the Yi lacquerware painting technique in Dafang, Guizhou. The company's lacquerware cultural and creative product series cover both handicrafts and utility wares, and feature unique and innovative designs in terms of moulding, ornamentation and colour.

Utility ware takes the lacquerware ashtray on the left above as an example, the moulding of the ware is square on the outside and round on the inside, and the modern design application is reflected in the combination of Yi traditional lacquerware ornamentation and Han lacquerware ornamentation, with five colours of black, red, yellow, blue and white, which is the decorative design of the company with its original artistic style.

Decorative ware to vases, for example, the above in the figure of modern design application is reflected in the way of the composition of the moulding, breaking the traditional conventional complete symmetrical shape of the moulding, the use of ovoid asymmetric shape, there is a modern sense of form. Instead of using the traditional representational painting decoration, the egg-shell inlay and rhinoceros-skin lacquer process in other regional lacquer crafts formed the effect of the abstract texture pattern, and at the same time formed a simple relationship between the red, white and gold colour scheme.

The modern design application of the vase on the right above is reflected in the innovative design of the ornamentation, using the unique hidden flower technique of Dafang lacquerware as the basic colour base, and Yi scripts as the new symbols of the decoration.

Table 4.6： Cultural and Creative Product Series of Lacquerware Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: It will retain the moulding of traditional ware, but will be deformed and deconstructed	Inherited elements: Traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation; Red, yellow, blue, black and	New context and application scenario: The fusion of Yi and Han lacquerware artistic characteristics is expressed,

Table 4.6 continued

on the basis of this treatment; The stylistic choices of ornamentation and colour scheme are close to the traditional forms.	white colour scheme; Intermingling of traditional Yi and Chinese culture and art.	highlighting the unique design and artistic style; The unity of practical and decorative applications.
Modern design applications: The moulding of the ware has more modern design composition style; The ornamentation will be restructured and innovated on the basis of traditional ornamentation, and new decorative ornamentation will be developed and created according to cultural and technological choices; Colour design choices are diverse and have a modern aesthetic style. The monochrome treatment and reconfiguration of ornamentation reflect the principles of DDI by integrating tradition with contemporary design language, showcasing how modern design can infuse traditional craft with new meaning. moulding: Symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes coexist. Ornamentation: Reconstructive decoration and original new decoration coexist. Colour: based on five colours, with a variety of colour schemes.	Innovative design: Breaking through the complete symmetrical modelling of the traditional Yi lacquerware; Recombination of ornamentation based on the traditional Yi lacquerware motifs; Innovative combinations of Yi and Chinese lacquerware ornamentation in a way of fusion and application; Creative development on the basis of Yi scripts to form brand-new decorative ornamentation; The use of other kinds of lacquer crafts to form abstract texture ornamentation; The colour scheme is diversified and full of changes. Redefining cultural symbols: The design challenges traditional colour schemes and reinterprets Yi lacquerware ornamentation to fit modern aesthetic needs, demonstrating how DDI can guide cultural innovation.	Meaning: This multi-level innovative design not only breaks through the tradition, but also gives Yi lacquerware a richer and more modern aesthetic connotation. It realises the fusion of tradition and modernity, Yi culture and Han culture, and forms a unique design art style.

Case 6: Painted Lacquer Liquor Packaging Box of Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Development Co.



Figure 4.68: coloured Lacquer Liquor Packaging Box
Source: Photos provided by Gao

Guizhou's white wine is a local speciality, and Maotai liquor, for example, is used in Chinese state banquets. As early as the Dafang state-run factory, the company worked with the Maotai Winery to complete the design of the lacquerware packaging for the large Muzhen and small Muzhen series of Maotai white wine.

Similar commercial applications have also been made by Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Development Co. Ltd, and one of the typical examples is the liquor lacquerware packaging designed and produced for Guizhou Bijie Winery. The package is in the form of a square box with an upturned lid, made of wood. The cover is in the form of lacquer painting, which Gao Guangyou is very good at, and the theme is the bird's-eye view of the Bijie Winery. The innovation of the modern design application of this case is reflected in the ornamentation and the colour expression. The ornamentation adopts a flat pattern decorative technique, using a combination of dots, lines and surfaces to show a figurative scene pattern, with modern decorative meaning. The colours are green and

yellow, with black and white as interval colours, forming a sharp colour contrast and enhancing the visual impact. This innovative design not only demonstrates the traditional craftsmanship of lacquerware, but also gives the work a richer artistic expression through modern methods.

Table 4.7：coloured Lacquer Liquor Packaging Box Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Multi-colour matching form.	Inherited elements: Based on five-colour colour scheme.	New context and application scenario: Expressing figurative scenes with distinctive flat decorative style.
Modern design applications: The ornamentation adopts modern pattern plane decorative design form; The colour scheme is simple and modern in aesthetic style. The use of modern pattern design with a flat decorative style demonstrates how DDI drives the evolution of traditional Yi ornamentation into a contemporary visual language.	Innovative design: Breaking through the representational and realistic style of traditional patterns, using the compositional elements of dots, lines and surfaces to form a flat decorative style; Awareness of the use of interval colours. Through the creative recombination of traditional patterns, this design exemplifies how DDI encourages the breaking of traditional moulds to forge new, modern expressions of cultural symbolism.	Meaning: The innovation of modern pattern plane decoration design form forms a simple and modern aesthetic style, successfully realises the organic fusion of tradition and modernity, enriches the artistic connotation of Yi lacquerware, and makes positive contribution to the inheritance and innovation of Yi culture.
moulding: traditional moulding form. Ornamentation: Dots, lines and surface plane decorative patterns. Colour: Green and yellow are the main colours, black and white are the interval colours.		

Case 7: Drum-shaped Lacquer Storage Box



Figure 4.69: Drum-shaped Lacquer Storage Box
Source: Photos provided by Xia

The designer and maker of the lacquerware, Xia Minglang, is a provincial inheritor of the Yi lacquerware painting technique in Dafang, Guizhou, and a representative of the Han lacquer artists in this region. The innovative point of the modern design application of this programme is the exploitation of the ware type. The Chinese drum itself is a traditional musical instrument, not a practical one. However, he used this special moulding to re-conceptualise and cleverly transformed the hollow belly of the drum into a storage space, designing a storage box, transforming the moulding of the traditional musical instrument and giving it a practical function. This design case not only successfully realises the ingenious transformation of traditional artifacts, but also preserves the formal beauty of traditional drums, and at the same time, through the development and utilisation of space and practical functions, it gives a new life to this traditional artifact in modern design applications, and this innovative design demonstrates the diversified direction of the development of lacquerware in modern design applications.

Table 4.8： Drum-shaped Lacquer Storage Box Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Traditional ware modelling borrowed.	Inherited elements: Chinese drum shape.	New context and application scenario: Development and utilisation of Traditional Ware; Unification of decorative and utilitarian applications.
Modern design applications: Exploitation of space; The endowment of utility functions. Innovating the function of a traditional artefact, this design demonstrates how DDI fosters new uses for traditional objects, pushing the boundaries of design and cultural expression.	Innovative design: Converting the function of utensils. DDI principles enable the fusion of aesthetic and functional needs, as seen in the repurposing of traditional forms to create a practical and visually appealing object.	Meaning: This unique design not only retains the formal beauty of the traditional moulding, but also equips it with the functional requirements of modern life, realising the clever combination of traditional culture and modern life. Therefore, this modern design application is not only a continuation of the traditional moulding, but also a clever reorganisation and development of it, which provides a useful practical example for the integration of the tradition and modernity of Yi lacquerware.
moulding: traditional moulding. Ornamentation: small scale texture ornamentation. Colour: Red is the theme colour of the ware, white is the colour of the texture on the edge.		

Nowadays, consumers have changed from local community members to tourists and art connoisseurs, who have become the new patrons of these artefacts, and practical handcrafts have naturally become appreciated artefacts (Chutia & Sarma, 2016). Not being a local community, lacking relevant life scenes and habits, one cannot use Yi lacquerware as a practical utensil. When the researcher was invited to a local traditional meal at the Jiwu Wuqie family's home, we found that outsiders were very uncomfortable eating with

wooden spoons because they did not have the habit of eating this kind of food.

Tourists often regard cultural products such as art, rituals and artefacts as authentic because they are handmade by local people and made from local materials. At the same time, tourists go in search of authentic local indigenous people's living practices in tourist destinations, and these are often reflected through tourist souvenirs. The handicraft status and distinctive visual features of Liangshan Yi lacquerware cater for this authentic habit of tourists. Mass-produced handicrafts have lost their original authentic use and symbolic meaning. This has led to a flood of crude and gaudy lacquerware tourist commodities or crafts in Liangshan to cater for tourists, a short-sighted form of development that is extremely threatening to the development and utilisation of Yi lacquerware and to its own inheritance and sustainable development. In the pursuit of utilitarian social production, traditional handicrafts have little or no value in the urban market, and thus the process of innovation and reinvention is constantly occurring. The lacquerware industry in Dafang has been operating according to such a belief, and the locality is very good at being orientated to market demand. Moreover, many workshops and companies are directly facing consumers without intermediaries to form communication errors. So after the lacquerware industry in the Liangshan region also adopted this model, the creation of lacquerware types appeared to be proactive. For companies, design is a necessary means to develop new products in order to innovate new products, retain competitiveness and be able to gain benefits (Gao, interview). In the sustainable design of traditional Chinese crafts, innovation is seen as the best way to achieve sustainability. Through innovation, the artists are able to draw new inspirations from culture, materials, craftsmanship, experiences, local elements, and interactive experiences to express new ideologies (Li et al., 2019). Lacquerware artists are experts in

cultural heritage, and their knowledge integrates elements of experience, including personal history, local cultural heritage, and craftsmanship, which, when combined with modern art design concepts, can result in lacquerware works with more innovation and substance, injecting new vigour into traditional crafts and promoting their sustainable development.

ii. Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics in the Field of Modern Art Design

Traditional crafts can provide a positive perspective for change as they embody the cultural knowledge, practices and values of communities rooted in specific contexts and geographies (Zhan & Walker, 2019). Designers, on the other hand, cover multiple dimensions related to their products. At the same time, because of their design training, they are able to dig deeper, extract and integrate information and experiences from traditional crafts (Suib & Crul, 2020). In the context of Design-Driven Innovation (DDI), this process is particularly significant. DDI facilitates the exploration of traditional cultural elements and their integration into modern design, driving both functional and aesthetic innovations. Autonomous production is based on co-creation and represents a reconciliation between different fields of knowledge (Zhan & Walker, 2019). This approach, exemplified by cross-border cooperation, becomes a powerful vehicle for extracting the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware. By adapting these elements into different modern design fields, designers not only enrich the design elements but also ensure the continuous dissemination of Yi lacquerware's cultural characteristics. This process highlights the empathetic utility of design in bridging tradition and modernity, pushing forward the evolution of Yi lacquerware in new and innovative ways.

Case 1: Ceramic Design



Figure 4.70: "The Leisurely Yi Style" Ceramic Series Design
Source: Photos Provided by He

He Xia is currently a teacher of design at Xichang College's School of Art, as well as a professional ceramics designer. Xichang College is the highest school in Liangshan Prefecture, and her work is heavily influenced by the culture and art of the Yi ethnic group due to the unique geographic and human environment in which it is located.

The picture on the left above shows the heroic theme of the series, inspired by the hero's knot, a kind of headdress of the Yi men, which is wrapped around the head with a green and blue cloth and tied with a long conical knot on the right forehead, with a red tassel wrapped around the end of the cone, to show the mighty heroism. The Liangshan Yi people have long admired the masculine beauty of men and to show mighty heroism. The upper part of the design mimics the shape of a hair ornament, while the lower part of the design is inspired by the lacquered leather armour of the Yi warriors, which was often adorned with a sunbeams motif to give it a majestic appearance and a prayer for the blessing of the sun god. The ornamentation is based on the exaggerated and deformed sunbeams motif, forming a continuous pattern. The colours are based on terra cotta, with alternating intervals of black and red, highlighting the association between black and red

and the image of the hero.

The picture on the right above shows the Beauty Jars of this series, which belong to the utility wares. The moulding of the ware is borrowed from the high-footed, round-bellied ware of the Yi lacquerware, which is more adaptable to the practical needs of modern life through the clever interpretation of the traditional moulding. The design of the ornamentation is inspired by the ornamental motifs of Yi lacquerware and traditional dress, which are reorganised to present a modern aesthetic pattern. Though the motifs do not have a clear symbolic meaning here, the reinterpretation of traditional elements makes them more in line with contemporary aesthetic trends. The colours are retained from the clay, highlighting the simplicity and natural beauty of the objects. The overall design maintains the traditional cultural characteristics and injects modern elements, so that the Beauty Jar not only has a practical function, but also shows a unique aesthetic taste, which not only inherits the Yi culture, but also integrates the design concept of modern and simple life.

Table 4.9： "The Leisurely Yi Style" Ceramic Series Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Traditional lacquerware tableware moulding borrowed; Retaining of the ornamental motifs of ornamentation; Colour symbols and meanings.	Inherited elements: Yi lacquerware tableware moulding; Traditional ornamentation; Traditional colours; Function-oriented aesthetic conception.	New context and application scenario: The traditional artistic elements of Yi lacquerware will be carried forward in the form of ceramics in diversified application scenarios, including home, business, cultural exchange and other occasions.
Modern design applications: Mimicry of the moulding of the ware; Deconstruction and reorganisation of	Innovative design: Combination of multicultural elements; Biomimicry of mouldings;	Meaning: By integrating the traditional elements of Yi lacquerware into modern ceramic design, it not only continues the tradition

Table 4.9 continued

ornamentation; Colour association application. Design driven by innovation (DDI) plays a key role in this design process, as it allows for the transformation of traditional Yi elements into modern, adaptable forms. This approach not only preserves cultural heritage but also makes it relevant in contemporary design contexts, ensuring that Yi lacquerware's artistic features are preserved and innovatively re-interpreted for modern utility and aesthetic demands.	Simplification and restructuring of ornamentation and colours; More adaptable to modern aesthetic concepts.	of Yi culture, but also makes it more in line with contemporary aesthetic trends. The innovation of the new design in moulding, ornamentation and colour makes Yi lacquerware more widely applicable and artistically expressive in modern society. This innovation is not only the inheritance of traditional culture, but also injects richer connotations into the Yi characteristics of ceramic art, and becomes an important representative of cultural diversity and integration.
moulding: The coexistence of traditional moulding and modern ware type. Ornamentation: Simplified and deconstructed reorganisation based on traditional ornamental motifs. Colour: black, red and clay.		

Case 2: Fashion Design



Figure 4.71: Modern Yi Ethnic Fashion Design Series
Source: Photos Provided by Su

Su Xiaoyan is a fashion designer who worked as a college teacher specialising in fashion design before retiring. She has long been devoted to the study of Yi costumes, and has cleverly integrated elements of Yi artistic characteristics into her costume design practice.

In Yi culture, Yi costumes and Yi lacquerware show similar features in terms of decoration and colour, and this similarity stems from their common cultural background and artistic elements. In the application process of modern design, these two have formed a common pattern through mutual borrowing, deconstruction and reorganisation. This pattern not only continues in design, but also plays an important role in the process of cultural inheritance and innovation.

In the picture on the left above, there is a short jacket, the theme pattern of the decoration is based on the bull's eye motif for variation and restructuring, and the other

auxiliary patterns are restructured and arranged with those of the traditional Yi costume. The colours are the red and yellow of lacquer as the main hues, with blue as the larger spacing and connecting colour, supplemented by a small amount of rose and white. In addition, black is used as the outline line of the ornamentation all over.

The picture on the right above is a long waistcoat with a simplified and exaggerated scale of the scroll pattern, and the monochrome blue colour scheme of the pattern contrasts sharply with the white wool base of the garment. The overall shape reflects an innovative interpretation of the traditional scroll pattern, injecting modern aesthetic elements through simplification and exaggeration. The blue monochrome pattern is not only unique in colour, but also creates a strong visual impact with the white base, highlighting the decorative and independent nature of the pattern. This design not only meets the needs of fashion aesthetics, but also reflects the respect for traditional elements and innovative design concepts. The whole presents a unique clothing modelling that combines traditional culture and modern fashion.

The carrier of clothing design is special compared with other design media, and needs to be more directly linked to the human body, taking into account the wearer's comfort, aesthetic experience and cultural background and other factors. As a kind of artwork with living function, the design of clothing not only focuses on formal aesthetics, but also needs to take into account the practicality and cultural heritage. In the integration of traditional culture, fashion design has become a unique way of expression, through clever design, can present rich cultural connotations in clothing, while meeting the needs of contemporary people for fashion and personalisation. This makes fashion design unique in the design medium, and more humanistic and socially valuable.

Table 4.10： Modern Yi Ethnic Fashion Design Series Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Ornamental motifs are preserved; Colour symbolism and allegory.	Inherited elements: Traditional ornamentation; Traditional colours.	New context and application scenario: Introducing the artistic elements of traditional Yi lacquerware into fashion design becomes an expression of Yi culture in contemporary fashion. This kind of design not only shows traditional culture in daily wear, but also can be applied to cultural exhibitions, fashion shows and special occasions to show the unique cultural taste for modern people.
Modern design applications: Carrier converted to soft fabric; Deconstruction and reorganisation of ornamentation; Colour restructuring. Design Driven Innovation (DDI) plays a key role in this case, as it emphasizes the reconfiguration and reorganization of traditional Yi lacquerware elements to create new and relevant fashion products. By extracting symbolic ornamentation and colour schemes, DDI allows for the preservation of Yi culture while simultaneously modernizing it to meet contemporary aesthetic and functional demands. This approach fosters a deeper connection between traditional craftsmanship and modern design, resulting in a fashion collection that speaks to both	Innovative design: Combination of multiple art forms; Simplicity and modernisation of dress shapes. Deconstruction and restructuring of ornamentation and colours to better suit modern aesthetics.	Meaning: The innovative design application of traditional lacquerware's ornamentation and colours on clothing presents a more simple and modern aesthetic style, which makes the traditional culture more inclusive and can be better integrated into the contemporary society, and not only enriches the forms of expression of Yi culture, but also contributes positively to the inheritance and development of Yi culture in the field of clothing, and at the same time broadens the channels for the promotion and publicity of traditional lacquerware.

Table 4.10 continued

cultural heritage and modern style.		
Ornamentation: Deconstructed and restructured on the basis of traditional ornamental motifs. Colour: Reconstruction of the black, red and yellow colour scheme of lacquerware and the colour of traditional Yi dress, or the simple colour relationship of monochrome.		

Case 3: Tableware Design



Figure 4.72: Modern Yi Tableware Design Series
Source: Photos Provided by Chen

Chen Yu is currently a professional lacquer teacher and designer at Sichuan Normal University in China. Her representative design case, the Modern Yi Tableware Design Series, is selected here to analyse the application of traditional Yi lacquer artistic characteristics in modern tableware design.

In this design scheme, all aspects of tableware design are emphasized, including design elements such as material, moulding, ornamentation and colour, which form a

complementary relationship with each other. On the basis of ensuring the realization of function, the design language of Yi lacquerware is cleverly combined with modern product design, and by adopting the modern packaging form of combination and series, the structure of Yi lacquerware's moulding, colour, composition and ornamentation are improved, and a certain common feature is chosen to unify the design, which can not only present a variety of changes in aesthetics, but also show the overall visual aesthetics, and strengthen the artistry of modern lacquerware tableware products. To create a design product beyond the traditional national culture and modern style, to achieve the inheritance and development of traditional Yi lacquerware.

The above left case name is "Ming" series of lacquer tableware design, the design inspiration of the programme mainly comes from the worship of the sun, moon and stars in Yi culture. The design of the tableware combines the images of the sun and the moon, simplified into simple round and half-moon shapes, combined with the form of Western tableware. In terms of ornamentation, the edges and middle of the vessel are decorated with concentric circles of fire striker and sun motifs in a linear grouping, echoing the meaning of the sun and moon represented by the mouldings. In terms of colour design, the main tone of the tableware is white, which is commonly used in modern times, while the main ornamentation is yellow, which is used in traditional Yi lacquerware to reflect the harvest, the sun, the moon and the stars, with the periphery decorated with a slightly wider blue sunburst pattern, and the inner circle decorated with a red sunburst pattern, which creates a strong complementary relationship of colours. Overall, this set of tableware echoes each other in moulding, ornamentation and colour, presenting a generous and elegant design style.

The design in the middle of the above case is inspired by the colourful association of Yi traditional lacquerware, the design of this scheme combines the form of western tableware with the colour and ornamentation of traditional Yi lacquerware, and mainly considers the function of western dining tableware as the main consideration. The moulding uses a square design with curved edges, which is more rounded and softer in shape. The pattern is designed to fit the pattern and is divided into two levels. The main axisymmetric pattern is the first layer, which consists of the pumpkin seeds motif radially arranged in the centre, and the second layer consists of the deformed ram's horn motif arranged linearly. The colour design retains the traditional Yi lacquerware colour language of red, yellow and black, appearing in alternating rows from the inside to the outside, with the red and black colours used at intervals. The overall tone is dominated by red and yellow, presenting a warm and lively atmosphere.

The case on the right above also stresses the extended use of colour, but instead of inheriting the colour of Yi lacquerware, it substitutes the colour of other crafts to expand the colour scope of modern lacquerware tableware. This case combines the blue hue of celadon porcelain with traditional Yi lacquerware ornamentation to create a single-coloured tableware, but the symbolism and connotations of the ornamental motifs are preserved intact. This design reflects the fusion of two national cultural and artistic characteristics, and is adapted to the aesthetic needs of modern society.

Table 4.11： Modern Yi Tableware Design Series Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Traditional lacquerware	Inherited elements: Yi lacquerware mouldings; Traditional ornamentation;	New context and application scenario: Meet the psychological needs

Table 4.11 continued

tableware moulding borrowed; Patterns and motifs are preserved; Colour symbolism.	Traditional colours; Function-oriented aesthetic conception.	of modern people; Adaptation to the aesthetic and usage functions of modern society.
Modern design applications: Simplification of moulding; Deconstruction and reorganisation of ornamentation; Colour association application. Design Driven Innovation (DDI) is central to this case, as it allows for the creative reorganization and reinterpretation of traditional Yi lacquerware elements within the context of modern design. By deconstructing and restructuring the ornamentation and colour schemes, DDI principles help integrate Yi culture into contemporary design in a way that resonates with modern aesthetic trends and functional needs. The approach combines the beauty and symbolism of Yi lacquerware with practical design considerations, offering a new life to traditional elements in a modern context.	Innovative design: Combination of multicultural elements; Simplicity and rationalisation of the moulding, in line with ergonomics; Deconstruction and restructuring of the ornamentation and colours to better suit modern aesthetic concepts.	Meaning: By cleverly integrating the design elements of traditional Yi lacquerware with modern tableware using modern design techniques, it stimulates the user's visual association with national culture. The designer is committed to creating modern lacquer tableware with unique ethnic style, so that the Yi lacquerware design elements become fashionable decorative elements easily accepted by the public in the market, and truly integrated into the life of modern city people.
moulding: Co-existence of traditional and modern mouldings. Ornamentation: Deconstruction and reorganisation based on the traditional ornamental motifs. Colour: Black, red and yellow colour scheme and other colours co-exist.		

Case 4: Furniture Design



Figure 4.73: "A Yi Meng Ge" Yi Children's Furniture
Source: Photos Provided by Erguo Design Studio

Erguo is a design team that focuses on Yi culture, and is headed by a designer with Yi ethnicity. Their design concepts have always been centred around Yi culture and art. By selecting the characteristic elements of Yi culture and recreating their designs, they are committed to integrating traditional culture into modern art design and injecting new vitality into Yi culture. Through in-depth study of Yi traditions and keen grasp of modern art design trends, Ergo design works not only show the unique charm of Yi culture, but also find a balance between tradition and modernity, making positive contributions to the inheritance and innovation of Yi culture.

The "A Yi Meng Ge" series is a piece of Yi children's furniture, whose design is inspired by the longitudinal section of Yi lacquerware wine sets, and whose ornamentation are derived from a variety of crafts such as Yi lacquerware, Yi dress and silver jewellery. The series of furniture is named "A Yi Meng Ge" after the traditional Yi children's gathering ceremony. In this ceremony, the ancient disaster myths are recounted to convey disaster prevention knowledge and environmental protection concepts to the children. At the same time, through some "simulated sorcery" sessions, the children cultivate the courage to fight against evil forces, teamwork and openness and honesty.

The series consists of four small chairs with abstract variations in the shape of different wine sets, and the ornamentation also vary according to the shape of the chairs, giving each chair a unique character. Higher purity colours are used to stimulate children's colour recognition, and the strong contrast of colours is beneficial to children's visual development. The overall appearance presents an anthropomorphic design, aiming to make the product more affable and become a good friend to the child in the process of growing up. These tiny chairs look like elves, knights, pylons and so on, guiding children to discover more interesting, cute and fresh things in life. This is a great design case that focuses not only on the product itself, but also on the national symbols and beliefs that underlie it.

Table 4.12： "A Yi Meng Ge" Modern Yi Children's Furniture Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Traditional lacquerware wine sets type borrowed; Ornamental motifs are	Inherited elements: The moulding of Yi lacquerware; Traditional ornamentation;	New context and application scenario: Meet the psychological needs of children; Adapt to the aesthetic function

Table 4.12 continued

preserved; Colours symbolize allegory.	Traditional colours.	and use function of modern society; Personalised and customised services, consumer self-interpretation.
Modern design applications: Deconstruction and reorganisation of mouldings; Deconstruction and restructuring of ornamentation; Colour composition application. Design Driven Innovation (DDI) plays a key role in this project by transforming traditional Yi lacquerware elements into functional, modern furniture designs. The deconstruction of traditional shapes and ornamentation, coupled with the strategic reorganisation of colours, allows for a seamless integration of Yi culture into contemporary products. By combining artistic elements from multiple Yi crafts and leveraging consumer customization, the design embodies DDI's principle of creating new, innovative solutions through cultural revitalisation.	Innovative design: Combination of artistic elements of multiple craft types; Rationalisation of the moulding, in line with ergonomics; Deconstruction and restructuring of ornamentation and colours, more adaptable to the aesthetic concept of modern people; The establishment of a pattern library allows consumers to self-select and combine patterns, creating unique customized furniture.	Meaning: Through the innovative design of moulding, ornamentation and colour, the goal of meeting the psychological needs of children and adapting to the aesthetics and use function of modern society is achieved in the new context. This series of innovative designs not only makes Yi lacquerware more modern, but also injects new cultural connotations into it and promotes the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture.
moulding: The chair shape is generated by deconstructing the shape of traditional Yi lacquer wine sets. Ornamentation: Deconstructed and restructured on the basis of traditional decorative motifs. Colour: Black, red and yellow colour scheme based on the addition of blue and white.		

Case 5: Ornament Design



Figure 4.74: Lacquer Ornament
Source: Photos Provided by Qumu & Gao

The direct examples of jewellery design applications collected by the researcher in the research and interviews are still mainly presented in the form of lacquer, and there is a very clear visual difference between Liangshan and Dafang regions.

The picture on the left above is a representative lacquer necklace from the Qumu Family Lacquer Workshop in Liangshan. The entire necklace is a combination of beads and pendants, with the individual beads borrowing the shape of the Han Chinese barrel beads, and the pendant imitating the gourd shape. The ornamentation is directly restructured from the traditional Yi lacquerware motifs. The combination of the ornamentation and the moulding of the necklace emphasises the beautiful symbolism, and the gourd pendant is decorated with the Eight Treasures motif, which has the semantic meaning of happiness and good fortune. The colours also continue the relationship between the black, red and yellow colour scheme, although the bead connection is supplemented with orange, yellow, blue and white beads to increase the level of change.

Pictured above right is a series of large lacquer bracelets by Dafang County Gaoguang Yi Feng Lacquerware Development Co., Ltd, an outstanding representative of the lacquer jewellery field, and an example of the unique way in which lacquer craftsmanship and jewellery design can work together. This collection of bracelets presents a diverse range of mouldings, with ornamentation that include not only representational patterns but also abstract textures created by different lacquer techniques. In terms of the colour palette, the design takes full creative liberty, blending traditional colour palettes with contemporary colour schemes. The design is not only traditional but also modern, providing an inspiring example of the fusion of lacquer craftsmanship and jewellery design.

Table 4.13：Ornament design Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Ornamental motifs are retained; Texture ornamentation; Colour symbolizes association.	Inherited elements: Traditional ornamentation; Traditional colours.	New context and application scenario: Adapt to the aesthetic function and wearing function of contemporary society; Individualised style highlighting and good meaning.
Modern design applications: moulding bionic; Deconstruction and restructuring of ornamentation; The use of colour compositions. Design Driven Innovation (DDI) is evident in this case through the deconstruction and reorganisation of traditional Yi ornamentation and colour schemes. By applying modern design techniques and adapting the cultural elements to contemporary forms, the	Innovative design: Combination of artistic elements of multiple craft types; Diversity of shapes; Reconstructive application of ornamentation and colours, more adapted to the aesthetic concepts of modern people.	Meaning: Closely connecting the lacquer craft with the form of ornament design to produce diversified decorative effects not only makes Yi lacquerware better adapted to aesthetic demands in contemporary society, but also provides new possibilities for the inheritance and development of Yi culture in the field of ornament design.

Table 4.13 continued

jewellery designs offer a bridge between Yi heritage and modern aesthetic preferences. The combination of bionic moulding, abstract textures, and restructured colour compositions reflects the application of DDI principles to bring Yi lacquerware into the realm of modern fashion, making it both culturally significant and marketable to a wide audience.		
ornamentation. Colour: Black, red and yellow as the basis of the colour scheme, with the addition of multi-colour support.		

Case 6: Home Design



Figure 4.75: Yi Ethnic Group Residential Bedroom Space Design
Source: Photos Provided by Southwest University

Bedroom space design scheme for a Yi minority house by Zhang Weixia, a postgraduate student of art design at Southwest University. As modern ethnic minority areas have increased their communication with the outside world, the long-term cultural integration has led to changes in the lifestyle and living habits of people in ethnic areas, and home design that incorporates Yi cultural and artistic elements will make the regional culture more fully visible and be passed on. In this project, the Yi lacquer art elements are mainly used on the floor and space partitions. The space partition is in the form of openwork screen, directly using the lacquer craft as the carrier, with the scroll pattern as the main pattern, the ornamentation of strong structural changes in the form of a more flowing, natural beauty, rich in the sense of rhythm and decorative, designed to suitable pattern of lacquer openwork partitions, following the lacquer decorative and practical functions. The carpet of the corresponding floor soft furnishings is also reorganized with plant patterns and modern flat decorative patterns, and the black and red colour scheme of traditional lacquerware echoes the steady colour system of the entire home space, which contains three-colour relationships.

Table 4.14： Yi Ethnic Group Residential Bedroom Space Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Ornamental motifs are preserved; Colours symbolize allegory.	Inherited elements: Yi lacquerware carrier; Traditional ornamentation; Traditional colours.	New context and application scenario: Adapt to modern people's living habits, psycho-emotional needs and aesthetic tendencies; Ethnic attractions, hotels, restaurants and living rooms.
Modern design applications: Deconstructive restructuring of ornamentation;	Innovative design: Combination of artistic elements of multiple craft	Meaning: By integrating the characteristic elements of Yi

Table 4.14 continued

Colour composition application; Principle of moderation application. Through DDI principles, this design innovatively reconfigures traditional Yi lacquerware elements, using them not only for their aesthetic value but also for their functional role in contemporary residential spaces. By integrating lacquer motifs into the home's partitions and textiles, the project successfully reimagines these traditional symbols to align with modern design needs. The colour scheme, drawn from traditional black, red, and yellow, is reinterpreted within a modern context, offering a harmonious balance between cultural preservation and design innovation.	types; Deconstruction and restructuring of ornamentation and colours; Combination with new carriers more adapted to modern living habits.	lacquerware, the introduction and innovative use of these symbols not only continues the traditional culture of Yi nationality, but also injects new design elements into the home design, which is more in line with the direction of the development of regionalised characteristic home.
Ornamentation: Deconstruction and reorganisation on the basis of traditional ornamental motifs. Colour: The colour of the space structure contains the basis of black, red and yellow colour scheme.		

Case 7: Packaging Design



Figure 4.76: "Yi Soul" Yi Style Series Packaging Design
Source: Photos Provided by Xichang College

Xichang College's art design programme has long been committed to using regional culture and art as a source to promote design teaching and to achieve the goal of design serving the local community. The graduation design work of Zhang Siyu, a student of Xichang College, was inspired by the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware. By knowing the artistic elements of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, deeply understanding the form and semantics of its ornamentation and colours, and then adopting the method of structural reorganization to create a packaging form that meets modern aesthetics. The unit shape of the main pattern is presented as a single round plane of lacquerware tableware, in which the traditional pattern form is formed according to the need to form the composition form suitable for the pattern, and the geometrical symmetry is superimposed on the continuous linear pattern to form the reconstruction method, and the repetitive arrangement of the round unit shapes also emerges as a special composition relationship, which is more modern and compositional sense. The black, red and yellow

colour scheme is weakened, highlighting the blue base colour, with white as the spacing colour to reflect the modern colour scheme, which is very stylistic in expression.

In the design expression stage, the designer released a profound cultural meaning through the choice of packaging form, the use of ornamentation and colour matching. The modern restructuring of the moulding echoes contemporary aesthetic trends, the clever deconstruction of the ornamentation conveys respect for traditional culture and innovation, and the rich mix of colours makes the whole package more vibrant and attractive.

Table 4.15： "Yi Soul" Yi Style Series Packaging Design Case Analysis

Design objective-understanding	Design conception-reorganisation	Design expression-interpretation
Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics: Tableware moulding borrowing; Ornamental motifs retained; Colour symbolic allegory.	Inherited elements: Lacquerware tableware round shape as a flat pattern shape; Traditional ornamentation; Traditional colours.	New context and application scenario: Adapt to the living habits, psycho-emotional needs and aesthetic tendencies of modern people; Ethnic hotels, restaurants and living rooms.
Modern design applications: Modern plane composition form applications; Modern colour composition applications; By applying the principles of DDI, the design successfully integrates traditional Yi lacquerware's artistic elements into a modern context. The reorganization of ornamentation and colour, along with the restructuring of the form, showcases how DDI can drive cultural innovation. Through this process, the design not only adapts Yi culture to modern aesthetic	Innovative design: Deconstructive restructuring of ornamentation and colour, multiple methods of expression.	Meaning: By extracting the artistic characteristic elements of Liangshan Yi lacquerware, the traditional cultural elements are successfully integrated into modern packaging design, which not only inherits the unique charm of Yi culture, conveys the respect and innovation of traditional culture, but also adapts to the aesthetic demand for packaging design in modern society.

Table 4.15 continued

needs but also brings new life to traditional elements, ensuring that they continue to resonate in contemporary society.		
Ornamentation: Deconstructed and reorganised on the basis of traditional ornamentation. Colour: The relationship between black, red and yellow colour scheme is weakened, with blue as the basic tone and white as the interval colour.		

Modern art design usually takes elements from Yi lacquerware art characteristics through three ways, namely, moulding, ornamentation and colour. The optimal solution is not only the innovative reapplication of lacquerware elements, but also the semantic embodiment behind them.

Tung and Chen (2013) argue that if designers have a deeper understanding of the craft, then the commonality between designers and craft artists will be enhanced, which in turn influences the creativity of the team. This can be seen in the lacquerware products of the Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Company, but they are still basically decorative designs and craft modifications based around traditional lacquerware types. On the contrary, in different art design fields, designers just focus on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware itself to create designs, not focusing on the lacquerware craft, but can glow with unparalleled creativity, at least in terms of visual elements, which are preserved and disseminated.

4.4.3 Design Strategies for Modern Applications of Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics

By collaborating with craft artists, designers can incorporate unique craft culture into design elements and achieve strategic differentiation. At the same time, craft artists can draw on the professionalism of designers to create craft products adapted to contemporary consumer needs. Collaboration and complementarity between designers and craft artists can help to create unique and recognizable designs in a globalized market, which in turn promotes craft heritage and innovation (Tung & Chen, 2013). These improvement initiatives are expected to further enhance the position of Yi lacquerware and related design products in the overall economic competition. Supporting the sustainable development of the regional craft economy through the preservation of culture.

Yi lacquerware artisans and designers alike can better present the inherent qualities of their work with the help of a more sophisticated set of modern and design strategies. The sustainable development of Yi lacquerware can be promoted through a series of stages, including the recognition, reorganization, and interpretation of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware to guide relevant designs. Design intervenes in cultural shaping by introducing object participation, where the history of the designed object is the history of culture. Design has never been culturally neutral but has always conveyed social and cultural values. Analyzing Yi lacquerware and combining the artistic elements with modern art design is a new way of developing lacquer art and creating a national brand with Chinese characteristics. It is an effective way to win the competitiveness of the international art market and has important practical significance.

To deepen this argument, this section introduces the theory of Design-Driven Innovation (DDI), which explores how design redefines the cultural meanings of

traditional crafts to achieve cultural transformation from traditional art to modern design. DDI emphasizes that by reinterpreting the cultural connotations of products, designers can not only evoke emotional resonance among consumers but also enhance the products' competitive edge in the market. This theory provides systematic guidance for the application of Yi lacquerware in modern design.

i. Major Challenges and the Role of Design-Driven Innovation (DDI)

The function, aesthetics and commodity value valued by modern design is a joint product of art, technology and management. Handicrafts developed in cities not only produce practical products with both function and aesthetics, but also create purely appreciative artefacts. To explore the new aesthetic direction of urban handicrafts in the context of modern design, it is first necessary to understand the basis of transformation:the ontological language of handicrafts (Wu, 2021). Based on the previous case study, it is evident that both lacquer craftsmen and designers require a deeper understanding of Yi lacquerware itself, its forms of artistic characteristics, symbolic semantics, as well as the cultural and social backgrounds behind it, and other related knowledge systems.

In this context, the transfer and externalization of tacit knowledge becomes a central issue. Tacit knowledge is deeply embedded within the socio-cultural context of Yi lacquerware, shaped by ethnicity, history, and social ideology. This knowledge, passed down through generations, is usually learned through informal transmission and practice. In order for this knowledge to be leveraged effectively in modern design, it must be made transferable and accessible for designers. This is where the Design-Driven Innovation (DDI) approach comes into play, helping to facilitate the transfer and transformation of tacit knowledge into explicit, actionable design principles.

The fields of design and craftsmanship contain knowledge and experience that is valuable for product development; however, this knowledge is usually tacit, confined to a specific geographical area, and deeply rooted within the respective fields. In order to maintain and pass on knowledge, it must be transferable. (Suib & Crul, 2020). But Yi lacquerware happens to be based on socio-cultural implicit knowledge, including the social context constructed by factors such as ethnicity, history, and social ideology, as well as the clique environment in which an individual is embedded, which all have an impact on the way an individual perceives. This implicit knowledge is acquired by craftspeople over a long, sustained experience in their particular racial, cultural, and natural environments. If designers ignore the tacit knowledge component of crafts and rely only on explicit knowledge features such as symbols and forms presented in reference to traditional crafts for the redesign of traditional crafts, their innovation will be limited and tend to remain only in the surface form. Only when the tacit knowledge in a particular organisation (group) can be shared by the organisation's members in a way that enables the tacit knowledge to be connected, transferred between the members, and externalised into explicit knowledge can knowledge innovation achieve exponential growth, thus fostering the most valuable ideas (Zhang, 2015). As mentioned earlier in the specific case, Ergo, a team of Yi designers, happens to be a practitioner of this research finding.

A heritage product serves as an object that demonstrates cross-disciplinary knowledge. From the perspective of the craft domain, it carries the knowledge to make the product, which is usually acquired through transmission and informal learning and is inherently tacit. From the perspective of the design domain, traditional products have unique cultural characteristics, but they are still part of the product. Therefore, the understanding of modern products and their production processes in design theory is

equally applicable to the understanding of traditional products. The point of overlap between the informal knowledge acquired by craftspeople and the formal knowledge learnt by designers can be an interesting focus for knowledge exchange (Suib & Crul, 2020). Design products are standardised products produced to meet the needs of the masses, whereas craft products carry specific cultural and emotional symbols and present customised or diverse characteristics. Although design and craft are different in nature, they share many similarities in terms of behaviours, goals and processes. Because of this, design and craft collaborations have unique advantages over collaborations with other fields or industries, creating powerful complementarities and contributing to the substantive development of both parties (Tung & Chen, 2013).

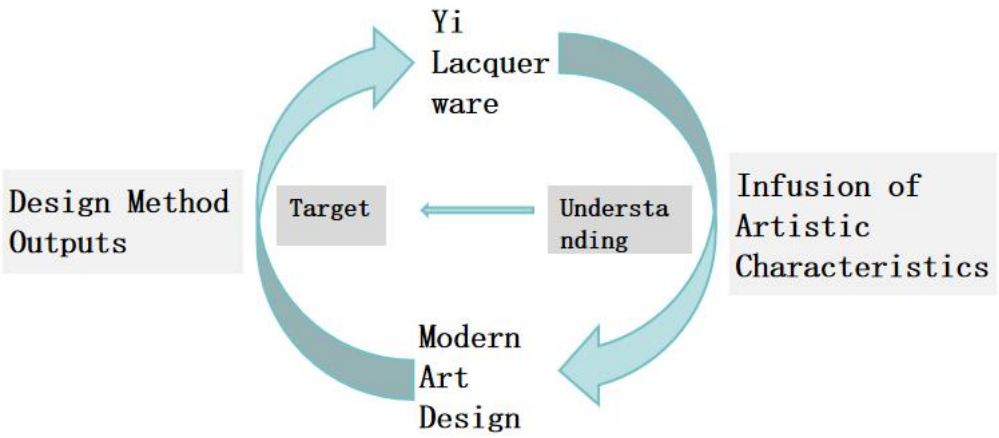


Figure 4.77: Knowledge Understanding and Transfer
Source: Researcher's Illustration

Design is the ability to obtain logical results through thinking, and through design, designers reshape the artistic characteristics and cultural meanings of handicrafts to obtain new ways of cultural interpretation in the new era. As an interpreter of regional or national culture, designers have a social responsibility to preserve the original cultural attributes of handicrafts. But at the same time, it is necessary to consider how to make

consumers accept ancient forms of handicrafts in today's society (Soares et al., 2016). The process of making Yi lacquerware is itself a process of art design that evolves and progresses over time. The purpose of introducing these new elements is to enable traditional craft products to keep pace with the demands of modern life (Huhtamaa, 2006). The modern product diversification of Yi lacquerware has important economic value and cultural significance. As a cultural carrier with specific functions and commodity significance, the design of Yi lacquerware should first focus on its decorative features and functionality. Designers should meet the demands of modern life through product differentiation and segmentation, injecting new vitality into them and finding new opportunities for development in the market. The possibility of reconstruction becomes a necessary way to maintain the vitality of urban handicrafts (Wu, 2021).

In line with DDI theory, the design process of Yi lacquerware should incorporate principles that ensure innovation while maintaining cultural integrity. Designers can extract and reinterpret core elements such as moulding, ornamentation, and colour from Yi lacquerware, while simultaneously infusing new design methods and aesthetic approaches. This serves to preserve the uniqueness of Yi lacquerware while enabling it to meet the demands of contemporary consumer preferences. Based on the previous case study, it can be learnt that inheriting the elements of lacquerware artistic characteristics and restructuring them is a very typical and effective design pathway, which is the key to promote the success of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in the application of modern art design. In the process of design restructuring, design elements can be extracted from the three aspects of moulding, ornamentation and colour and the symbolic semantics they represent, and new elements can be reconstructed and derived by applying a variety of design composition methods. This approach not only helps to preserve the uniqueness of

the traditional Yi lacquerware national culture, but also provides innovative and in-depth design applications for contemporary society.

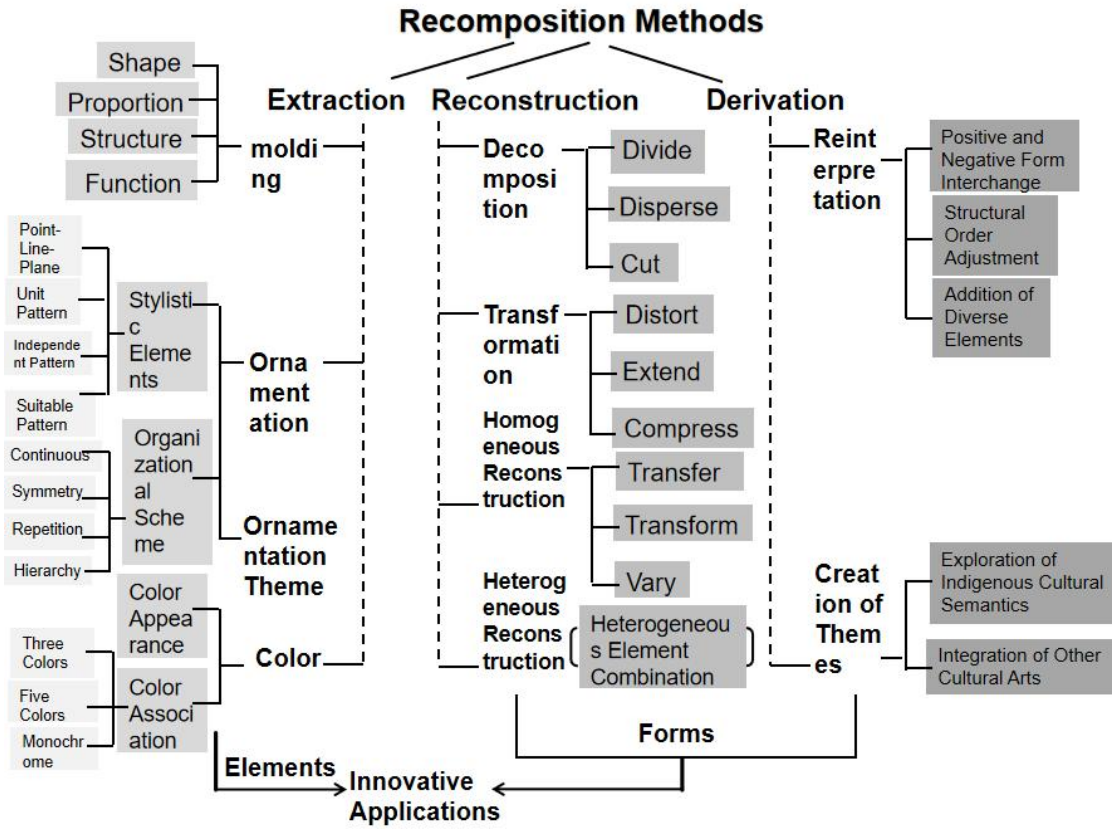


Figure 4.78: Recomposition Methods
Source: Researcher's Illustration

The pursuit of creative forms of application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design results in the search for a new interpretation of traditional craftsmanship and modern art design, making Yi lacquerware a unique resource in modern art design and giving it a new contextual expression, which also demonstrates the continued vitality and richness of traditional culture in the field of contemporary art. Therefore, in the interpretation stage, attention is given to the complete interpretation of the cultural connotation of the design, delving deeper into the intersection of traditional crafts and modern art design, and imbuing the works with deeper meanings and unique

expressions. Interpretation is not only an extension of the design idea, but also a profound interpretation of the culture carried by Yi lacquerware, so that it can be inherited and innovated in the field of modern art design. Therefore, the integrity of the interpretation process is crucial to ensure that the design concept and cultural elements can be fully and accurately conveyed, so that the work will have more profound cultural connotations and modern significance.

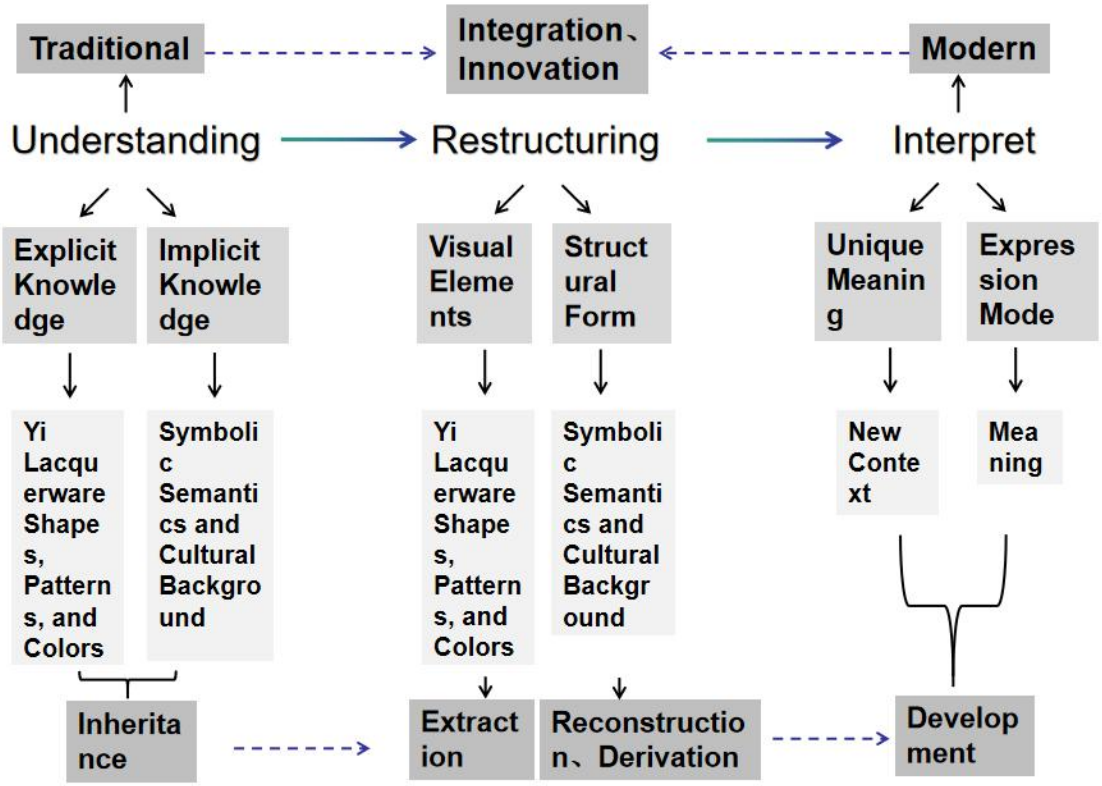


Figure 4.79: Modern Art Design Application Strategy Illustration of Yi Lacquerware Artistic Characteristics
Source: Researcher's Illustration

ii. Refining Design Strategies

Knowledge Transformation and Transmission

In-depth Understanding of Tacit Knowledge in Lacquerware： In the design innovation of Yi ethnic lacquerware, it is crucial to deeply understand the tacit knowledge inherent in traditional craftsmanship. The process of lacquerware making, the manual techniques, and the cultural meanings behind them are often passed down through generations by experienced craftsmen. In this context, the designer plays the role of a "bridge," extracting and transforming this tacit knowledge from traditional handcraft processes into explicit knowledge. This transformation requires designers to delve into the craft through research, interviews, documentation, and literature analysis, gaining a deep understanding of the lacquerware techniques. Additionally, close collaboration with craftsmen is essential to explore the cultural and historical significance behind the craftsmanship. For example, understanding the symbolic meanings behind the decorative patterns in Yi lacquerware is vital for modernizing these elements in design.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Knowledge Externalization： To effectively transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, designers should collaborate with craftsmen, cultural scholars, and historians in an interdisciplinary manner. By engaging in workshops, design experiments, and collaborative projects, designers can make the details of traditional lacquerware — such as crafting techniques, decorative patterns, and their cultural and symbolic significance — tangible and usable in modern design. These workshops not only help to understand the intricacies of lacquerware craftsmanship but also allow experts to guide the transformation of traditional elements into a design language suited to contemporary needs. Through this process, designers can innovate while

preserving the essence of traditional craftsmanship, reinterpreting both form and function.

Cautious Use of Cultural Symbols

Modern Expression of Cultural Symbols： The decorative patterns in Yi lacquerware contain profound cultural symbols that are not merely decorative elements but carry specific historical, religious, and social meanings. When modernizing these designs, designers must fully understand and respect the essence of these cultural symbols, ensuring that they are not simply used as superficial ornamental elements. By cautiously using cultural symbols, designers can reinterpret them in a modern context, imbuing them with new meanings while preserving their depth and significance. This process requires cultural sensitivity and a careful reconstruction of the context in which these symbols are used. For instance, traditional elements like animal motifs and auspicious patterns, when reimagined through modern artistic language, can retain their cultural depth and symbolic meaning, while also aligning with contemporary aesthetic trends.

In-depth Deconstruction and Re-creation of Cultural Symbols： While respecting the integrity of traditional cultural symbols, designers can employ modern design language to deconstruct and re-create these symbols, producing designs that feel relevant to the present day. For example, combining traditional animal totem motifs with modern abstract forms can both convey the essential cultural values of the Yi ethnic group and meet contemporary aesthetic expectations. It is important to note that this transformation is not just a visual change but a re-engagement with the cultural depth and emotional resonance of these symbols.

Integration of Aesthetic Form and Modern Functionality

The "Moulding — Ornamentation — Colour" Triad Design Approach： In the modernization of Yi lacquerware design, the traditional "Moulding — Ornamentation — Colour" triad approach is crucial. First, designers should extract basic geometric shapes, such as circles and ovals, from traditional lacquerware forms, preserving their essential characteristics. Next, the design of decorative patterns should adhere to traditional decorative techniques (such as painting) while also incorporating modern design languages for innovation and restructuring. For instance, combining traditional geometric patterns with contemporary visual languages allows these designs to communicate cultural symbolism while remaining relevant to modern aesthetics. Finally, colour choices should maintain classic hues used in Yi lacquerware (such as three-colour or five-colour schemes) but can also introduce modern colours to meet current market demands. This design approach ensures that the modernized design retains the essence of traditional forms while introducing contemporary design language and functional requirements, thereby enhancing the market competitiveness of Yi lacquerware.

Combining Aesthetic Form with Functionality：Building upon the "Moulding— Ornamentation — Colour" triad, design must also consider the integration of modern functionality. Traditional Yi lacquerware was predominantly used for ceremonial or decorative purposes, but in modern design, lacquerware needs to accommodate a broader range of functionalities, such as becoming suitable for everyday use as tableware or home décor. Designers should adapt and innovate traditional forms to ensure they not only have artistic value in terms of aesthetics but also meet contemporary practical needs. The inclusion of functionality can reintroduce Yi lacquerware into the multifaceted contexts of

modern life, expanding its market application.

Value-Driven Principles and Market Application

Cultural Identity and Consumer Needs： Modern design must consider consumers' desire for cultural identity. Designers must not only embed deep cultural meaning within the products but also ensure that these cultural expressions resonate emotionally with consumers. As globalisation and cultural diversification continue to increase, consumers are increasingly drawn to products that carry cultural significance and uniqueness. Through value-driven design strategies, Yi lacquerware can meet the individual and functional demands of contemporary consumers while maintaining its cultural heritage. For instance, designers could offer personalized customization, allowing consumers to select their preferred lacquerware patterns and colours, thereby forging an emotional connection between the product and the consumer's cultural identity.

Customization and Differentiation Design： With the increasing demand for personalized products, customization and differentiation have become effective strategies to meet this need. In the modern design of Yi lacquerware, designers can leverage the differentiation and customization of cultural elements to satisfy consumers' desire for unique products. By offering a range of design options—such as tailoring lacquerware patterns to different regional or ethnic characteristics—and production modes (e.g., limited editions, custom patterns), designers can attract a diverse consumer base. At the same time, it is essential for designers to ensure that these customizations align with the core values of Yi culture, avoiding the misapplication or superficial use of cultural symbols.

In summary, the refinement of design strategies should encompass the transformation of traditional craftsmanship knowledge, the careful use of cultural symbols, the integration of aesthetic form with modern functionality, and value-driven market applications. By comprehensively planning and innovating in these areas, Yi lacquerware can successfully regenerate in modern design. These strategies not only provide theoretical guidance for the revitalization of Yi lacquerware but also offer practical solutions for its adaptation to the contemporary market, ensuring that it retains its cultural identity while thriving in the global design landscape.

iii. Principles of Design Strategy

Values are what motivate crafts to fulfil a sustainable design strategy. Design also needs to take into account social values, or may be influenced (whether consciously or unconsciously) by social values, and such values need to be appropriate to the time period (Coles & Norman, 2005). Therefore, in the design process, new knowledge about the consequences of decision-making should be acquired as much as possible, and knowledge that covers the process of product generation as well as its post-generation impact on the common good life of human beings and the harmonious development of society should be taken seriously (Xie, 2019).

In the application of modern art design of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics, there should be a basic principle bottom line, and three important issues need to be paid special attention to. First of all, in the application process, it is necessary to moderately draw on Yi lacquerware decorative patterns, avoid simple copying and replication, and eliminate one-sided symbolism when elements are extracted and reconstructed. Currently, people are prone to give superficial meanings to superficial symbols, yet the goal of

designing is to create works that resonate with individual inner feelings and cultural identity. Contemporary society pursues individualisation, modernisation and human culture, so the design should become a bridge for the integration of traditional culture and contemporary awareness, so that the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware can truly reflect the inheritance and promotion of Yi culture.

Secondly, it is to put an end to the blind imitation and copying of visual elements from western art and design. As China's design system is influenced by the Western modernist educational framework, designers can easily introduce Western art and design ideas into their work in practice. Therefore, complete Westernisation and blind imitation are big taboos to be avoided. Correctly understanding the essence of ethnic design, the design should maintain the traditional and ethnic characteristics in spirit and essence, but in the form of expression, it should embody modernity and fashionability, in order to conform to the aesthetics of modern people, and at the same time to meet the diversified, multi-level as well as multi-faceted needs of modern people. Injecting strong contemporary flavour and vitality into Liangshan Yi lacquerware patterns is an issue that we need to constantly think and explore. Such thinking and discussion will help to better balance the combination of traditional culture and modern aesthetics in design practice.

Finally, respecting the principle of national taboo, there are some specific patterns in the Yi lacquerware decorative motifs, such as the sunbeams motif, fire motif, etc., which have unchanging scenes of use and unalterable identifying elements and their semantics, so we have to be extra cautious in designing, and we can't change the visual characteristics and abuse them regardless of the scenes, which will destroy the national cognition they represent and also cause the national psychological discomfort, which will

have a negative impact on the inheritance and promotion. Therefore, we must follow the principle of respecting the nation when refining the design and specific application of decorative patterns with local culture and national religious beliefs. This includes the consideration of national culture, folklore and national beliefs, especially those involving national taboos. Only in this way will we be able to create superior works that are more humane and more in line with the national psyche. The adherence to this principle will help to ensure that the design respects and reflects the values and traditions of the nation while conveying the indigenous culture.

4.4.4 Strategic Insights for Future Applications

This section reinforces the study's third research objective by showcasing how design-driven innovation can facilitate the integration of Yi lacquerware into modern design practices. It demonstrates how the application of DDI theory can preserve the cultural essence of Yi lacquerware while ensuring its continued relevance in modern design.

i. Current Research Findings

This study provides a detailed analysis of the integration of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics—such as patterns, colours, and forms—into modern design, summarising several key elements to guide future design practices. The research identifies the following factors as crucial for the successful application of Yi lacquerware's artistic features in contemporary design.

Recreation of Cultural Symbols: While preserving the profound meanings of traditional lacquerware cultural symbols, designers have innovatively reinterpreted these

symbols to convey their cultural significance while aligning with the aesthetic demands of the modern market.

Integration of Aesthetic Form and Functionality: The "trinity" design philosophy of Yi lacquerware—comprising moulding, ornamentation and colour—has been successfully adapted into modern product forms. This balance between functionality and aesthetics has achieved remarkable results.

Market Value as a Driving Force: Leveraging cultural identity as a motivator, designers have emphasised the cultural value of Yi lacquerware in their designs while meeting consumer demands for personalised and customised products. This approach has provided robust support for product marketability.

These findings demonstrate that the fusion of tradition and modernity is not merely a superficial combination but a profound integration across cultural, functional, and market dimensions.

The study clearly illustrates the application of Yi lacquerware in contemporary design, showing how tradition and innovation can coexist harmoniously. These findings emphasize how cultural symbols, aesthetic forms, and market strategies can be blended to ensure Yi lacquerware's relevance and appeal in the modern market.

ii. Main Directions for Future Development

To ensure the successful revitalisation of Yi lacquerware in modern art design, the following main directions are proposed:

Expanding Application Fields

The modern applications of Yi lacquerware should further extend into diverse design domains. Design strategies should explore interdisciplinary applications in fields such as the arts, promoting the integration and innovation of traditional lacquerware culture in broader contexts. Partnerships with industries such as fashion and technology will be essential to achieving this goal.

Deepening Design Research

To advance the modernisation of Yi lacquerware, future research should enhance foundational studies on the semiotics of lacquerware motifs and its craftsmanship. Exploring the cultural backgrounds and symbolic meanings of Yi lacquerware patterns will offer deeper insights. Design-driven innovation can provide systematic methodologies for transforming traditional culture. For instance, modernising lacquerware techniques through digital modelling and 3D printing can improve production efficiency and precision. Such integration holds potential for advancing the functionality and sustainability of lacquerware products while preserving their cultural identity.

Expanding its application fields and deepening design research are essential steps to ensure that Yi lacquerware can thrive in contemporary markets while maintaining its cultural essence. The focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation provides a solid foundation for its integration into various design domains.

iii. Practical Implementation Pathways

Developing Cultural Product Lines

Designing culturally inspired product lines tailored to different consumer groups, such as trendy designs for younger demographics and artistic collections for premium markets, can effectively convey the cultural heritage of Yi lacquerware. Additionally, emphasising storytelling and the cultural value of the products through marketing strategies can enhance consumers' emotional connection to the designs.

Promoting Education and Heritage

Educational initiatives focusing on the cultural heritage and innovative design of Yi lacquerware, including training programmes at various levels and design competitions centred on Yi lacquerware, can cultivate cultural appreciation and inspire younger generations to reinterpret the tradition innovatively. Such efforts will help the next generation understand and value traditional culture while encouraging them to explore creative design possibilities.

Establishing Interdisciplinary Design Teams

Future design projects should establish interdisciplinary teams to optimise the entire process, from cultural interpretation to market adaptation. Teams composed of designers, cultural scholars, and market experts will ensure a holistic approach to product development, balancing cultural authenticity with market competitiveness.

Developing cultural product lines, promoting education, and establishing interdisciplinary teams are vital components of integrating Yi lacquerware into modern

design. By adopting these approaches, the study provides a clear roadmap for the cultural preservation and innovative modernisation of Yi lacquerware, ensuring its long-term viability in the global market.

iv. Future Outlook Based on Design-Driven Innovation

Design-driven innovation (DDI) theory will continue to play a pivotal role in future strategies. By leveraging DDI, designers can strike a balance between cultural transformation and market demands, ensuring that designs remain rooted in cultural heritage while meeting contemporary consumer needs. Dynamic updates to the semantics of cultural symbols can enable traditional elements to retain their vitality and adapt to evolving contexts.

The design strategies not only provide a roadmap for the modernisation of Yi lacquerware but also propose a scalable model applicable to the modernisation of other traditional cultural elements. By adopting these strategic directions, emphasising interdisciplinary collaboration, conducting in-depth research, and striking a balance between tradition and innovation, the future of Yi lacquerware in modern design holds immense potential for cultural preservation and economic success.

4.5 Discussion and Interpretation of Research Results and Findings

In this section, the research findings on the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware and their modern applications will be explored in depth, with interpretations from multiple perspectives. Firstly, the core artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware will be defined, clarifying its cultural connotations and formal features. Next, the differences in artistic characteristics across different regions will be discussed, along with an analysis of

the cultural and social factors behind these differences. Following this, the main factors influencing the development of Yi lacquerware art will be proposed, based on the discussion of these differences. Finally, the innovative aspects of the research findings will be summarized, along with their impact on modern art design and cultural inheritance, as well as the innovative paths and practical significance of Yi lacquerware art in modern art design.

4.5.1 Definition of Yi lacquerware

When comparing and contrasting the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang, it is necessary to define Yi lacquerware firstly, in order to determine whether the lacquerware in the two regions belongs to the category of Yi lacquerware.

There is no doubt that the lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan belongs to the Yi lacquerware, because to this day, its craftsmanship, artistic characteristics, the main body of inheritance, and even the main daily consumer groups are all closely related to the local Yi ethnic group.

However, as to whether the lacquerware in Dafang, Guizhou is Yi lacquerware, there are some different opinions in the academic circles. According to Zhang (2003), since the middle and late Qing Dynasty, Han lacquerware has dominated the production of lacquerware in Dafang, for example, the lacquerware such as leather boxes, leather dishes, gourds and other lacquerware described in the county records are mostly Han lacquerware. Therefore, he insisted that there were pure Yi lacquerware and Han lacquerware in Dafang region, and even now there are no traces of traditional Yi lacquerware in Dafang region. However, Liu (2019) points out that Yi lacquerware was widely used by commoners in

Dafang until the Qing Dynasty, but then, Han lacquerware in Dafang gradually flourished, while Yi lacquerware gradually declined. This change is believed to have originated from the influx of Han Chinese into Guizhou during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which led to the Yi changing from a dominant ethnic group to a non-dominant ethnic group. The strong rise of Han culture led to the gradual marginalisation of Yi culture, which ultimately led to the weakening of the craftsmanship and symbolic features typical of Dafang Yi lacquerware. Yin (2021) also points out that the definition of Dafang Yi lacquerware has also gone through several changes in cultural and ecological contexts; historically, it was the context of the transition from a single Yi culture to a Yi and Han fusion culture, and what is now embodied is the cultural refinement through the national platform, which has brought Dafang lacquerware back to the form of national handicrafts. It is worth noting that both "Dafang Han Lacquerware" and "Dafang Yi Lacquerware" have interacted with each other in the process of evolution, and it is difficult to make a clear distinction between them. The historical process of cultural fusion makes both of them merge with each other in the process of development, showing the state of complementing each other.

Therefore, for the comparison of the two Yi lacquerware, factors such as their historical evolution, cultural integration and subject ethnic changes need to be taken into account in order to understand their similarities and differences in a more comprehensive way. In this study, Yi lacquerware refers to lacquerware made in the Yi region, including but not limited to containers for food and drinks, daily life utensils, and decorative items with Yi cultural characteristics. This lacquerware craft reflects the unique aesthetics, lifestyle and artistic expression of the Yi culture, and has been historically inherited in Liangshan and Dafang regions. In the production of Yi lacquerware, natural lacquer is usually used and combined with local cultural traditions and aesthetic concepts to form

artworks with regional characteristics. With the passage of time, Yi lacquerware has gradually evolved and integrated under the influence of history, culture, and ethnic changes, showing a colourful artistic style.

4.5.2 Discussion of the Differences in Artistic Characteristics

This study found that the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions not only have differences in times, but also obvious regional differences, with similarities and differences in both traditional and modern lacquerware. The similarity in the traditional lacquerware artistic characteristics is that the two places have the typical homologous overlapping parts of Yi characteristic art elements. Only in the Liangshan region it is explicit, with a clear line of inheritance and perfect visual samples, while in the Dafang region it is implicit, lacking a clear line of inheritance and perfect visual samples. The similarity of the artistic characteristics of modern lacquerware is that the traditional visual characteristics of Yi lacquerware have been broken, with more diversified mouldings, more complex combinations of ornamentation, and richer colour relationships. It is just that the process of transforming lacquerware to modern design in Liangshan region is slow and conservative, while Dafang region is more accelerated and radical.

The similarities between the two regions in terms of traditional Yi lacquerware are partly homologous in terms of the mouldings, such as the choice of rotary wood, leather and horn bodies, while the specific mouldings that can be identified are the wooden spoons, round wine pots, tobacco cases in the storage category, musical instruments, some weapons, and Instruments for Bimo's conjuration. These mouldings are usually made with clean, flowing lines that emphasise the overall form and structure of the object. In terms of shapes, basic shapes such as round, oval and square are predominant, while others have

bionic shapes. In terms of proportions, traditional Yi lacquerware usually focuses on the overall balance and coordination, and achieves overall harmony and unity by adjusting the sizes and proportions of different elements. In terms of plane and space, traditional Yi lacquerware usually shows the characteristics of symmetry, hierarchy and perspective, enabling the viewers to appreciate the three-dimensional sense of the objects from different angles. Of course, the production process of lacquerware in Dafang region is more complicated than that in Liangshan region, so the forms of the wares are richer, and the combination of modelling elements is more than that of the latter.

As far as the modern lacquerware mouldings are concerned, the appearance characteristics of the newly produced mouldings in the two regions are mainly varied and adjusted in terms of shapes and proportional relationships, but the originality of the Liangshan region is weaker than that of the Dafang region. In the modern Yi lacquerware from the Dafang region, the lines and shapes of the mouldings are usually more varied, and in terms of proportions, the modern Yi lacquerware also pays more attention to individuality and innovation, breaking the traditional proportional constraints and presenting a more personalised style. In terms of spatial composition, modern Yi lacquerware also pays more attention to the sense of hierarchy and space of the objects, and shows a richer three-dimensional effect through the combination and layout of different elements. At the same time, since the lacquerware industry in both places directly imitates the appearance of other product designs, similarity is very prominent in the cultural and creative products, especially the low-end cultural and creative products for the mass tourism market.

Putting aside the overlap of the same origin, there is still a big difference between the traditional lacquerware ornamentation of Liangshan and that of Dafang. In terms of modelling elements and modelling methods, the former mainly uses the combination of point, line and surface modelling and two-dimensional planar processing methods, and most of the decorations are perfectly matched with the shape of the ware, which belongs to the comprehensive use of repetitive and combinational design. The motif seems simple, but it contains very specific symbolism, and also has a relatively close relationship with the shape of the moulding (but the connection between the symbolism and the shape of the moulding is gradually weakened in the modern design of ornamentation), which involves all aspects of the Yi people, and eventually forms a style characteristic with geometric abstract patterns as the main body. The latter is a modelling method combining lines and surfaces, with both flat decorations and treatments with deep realistic paintings. The organisational scheme is dominated by standalone and suitable patterns, supplemented by continuous patterns, and the modelling forms and semantics are not as closely linked to the moulding as in the Liangshan region. The symbolic semantics are more straightforward and easier to understand than those in the Liangshan region, resulting in a diversified style of ornamentation. The former motifs seem simple, but because they contain a lot of symbolism, and some of them also have one motif to express multiple meanings, coupled with the fact that they are usually composite ornamentation, they are vague, and to some extent they are quite impressionistic, especially for the audience of other nationalities, they can only be understood from the visual form, and there is no way to comprehend the deeper meanings. The semantics of the latter is a bit clearer, because many of them are more popularised allegories expressed in realistic pictures, which are not as deep as the symbolism of the former, and do not affect the understanding

of viewers who do not have the relevant cultural background.

Compared with the traditional lacquerware ornamentation, the modern Yi lacquerware ornamentation will show two kinds of changes. One is still based on the modelling elements and organisational scheme of the local traditional ornamentation, and then through the modification or creation of the modelling of the unit motifs, changing the organisational scheme for reorganisation and restructuring, or adding other decorative elements that do not belong to the Yi lacquerware ornamentation and reconstructing them again. This tendency of change will not cause an abrupt evolution of the visual form and symbolic semantics of the ornamentation, thus preventing it from deviating from the unique visual characteristics that have already been formed. The other tendency is to make a big breakthrough on the basis of the original ornamentation form, resulting in a visual effect that is very different from the original stylistic and organisational scheme of the ornamentation, which is even more ambiguous and chaotic in terms of the symbolic semantics. The advantages and disadvantages of this radical innovation for traditional Yi lacquerware are still debatable.

The most significant manifestation of the differences in the colours of traditional Yi lacquerware is the colour scheme, which is based on black, red and yellow in the homologous parts. The difference lies in the fact that in the Liangshan region, this colour system is extremely stable, even if there are changes, they are all adjusted within three colours, with very clear colour associations and symbols, belonging to the style of decorative colours. However, the five-colour system in Dafang region, with more cyan and white, and the changes are also more diversified, not only the decorative colour style, but also the realistic colour style.

The change of Yi lacquerware colours in modern times, its essence is beyond the aesthetic preference of a region and a nation. Modern colours are more transformative and innovative, but at the same time, modern colours consider ethical issues that transcend individual aesthetics (Serra & Llopis, 2012). The Yi society has changed with the development of modern society, and when facing the impact of modernisation and the challenge of cultural pluralism, the aesthetic concepts and social consciousness of individual ethnic groups have also changed. Therefore, the colour choices of modern Yi lacquerware pay more attention to fashion trends and modern aesthetics to meet the needs and aesthetic trends of the contemporary society and express the individual's attitude towards social change, cultural identity or personal identity. This innovative and diversified choice of colours reflects the Yi society's attitude of acceptance and change towards new things, demonstrates the development and evolution of Yi culture, and also reflects the modern society's reinterpretation of traditional minority cultures and the pursuit of sustainable development. Of course, it is undeniable that this kind of colour change also has the risk of making the unique symbolism and aesthetics of traditional lacquerware colours deviated and missing.

4.5.3 Discussion of the Causes of these Differences

This study found that the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions show a unique development trajectory in the interweaving of history, culture, custom and religion. Lacquerware in Liangshan region maintains relatively pure ethnic characteristics, while lacquerware in Dafang region presents a more complex and diverse appearance under the cultivation of multiple cultures. This difference is not only a reflection of the speed of cultural development of the two regions, but also a historical

testimony of the integration and development of Yi culture in different regions.

There is always a difference between peoples and times, and the speed of development of art forms will vary under different circumstances (Wölfflin, 2012). In the past, the Liangshan Yi were in a more closed natural and political environment for a long time, with a single ethnic group and a clear class division, it was difficult for the Liangshan Yi to integrate the culture of other ethnic groups and regions. Coupled with class confinement, the spread of cultural knowledge was also very limited, and this situation still exists even in modern times. This also makes the Yi lacquerware in this region retain a relatively pure form of national artistic characteristics for a long time. Therefore, here the lacquerware artistic characteristics of the form of interpretation of the long-term to maintain a stable state. On the other hand, the Dafang region is relatively in a more open territory, with a diversity of social classes, belonging to a combination of feudalism and slavery. In addition, there are various ethnic groups living together, national integration has been occurring very naturally, civilisation is characteristics than the progress of the Liangshan region, so the lacquer craft and artistic features in the Ming and Qing dynasties began to evolve and different from the Liangshan region, presenting a very significant form of artistic characteristics of national integration.

In addition, because of the two places in the geographic location, community settlement, social system and productivity development and other aspects of the inconsistency, resulting in the Liangshan region for a long time or to meet the local regional utility appliances for lacquerware production, simple technology, small number of products. And Dafang has long formed the export lacquerware industry, in order to meet the needs of the commodity economy, continue to carry out foreign exchanges, technology

enhancement, rich categories, production is larger, of course, will gradually lose the traditional Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics.

Differences in cultural factors between the two regions also have different levels of influence on the formation and development of lacquerware. In the Liangshan region, cultural factors such as calendar and festivals, totem worship and Yi literature (myths and legends) had a direct impact on the creation of artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, while religious beliefs and social relations were even more integrated into the period. In particular, the spread of the Bimo religion to the fields of writing, education, history and astronomy provided a profound religious and cultural foundation for the formation of lacquerware in the Liangshan region.

Unlike this, the Yi lacquerware art of the Dafang region is characterised by calendar festivals, totem worship, Yi literature (myths and legends), and is also deeply influenced by Han culture. The openness and ethnic integration of the Dafang region led to cultural pluralism, which made the artistic style of lacquerware show more complex and rich characteristics. The influence of Han religion is more significant in the Dafang region, where Han Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and other beliefs have left far-reaching traces. In addition, factors such as production techniques, individual craftsmen, local policies and industrial development also have a certain impact on the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions. Due to the relative closure of the Liangshan region, the production process is relatively traditional and conservative, and the inheritance between individual craftsmen is clearer. On the other hand, in Dafang region, influenced by market demand and external culture, the production of lacquerware has gradually become complex and diverse, and the inheritance among craftsmen may be relatively scattered. Local

policies and industrial development have also guided the development trend of Yi lacquerware to a certain extent, with positive promotion and, of course, a certain degree of negative impact.

Nowadays, due to social development, smooth traffic has contributed to deeper communication between the two regions and the outside world. The local transport network in Liangshan is more developed, with frequent movement of people and materials, and now it has become a famous tourist place in China by virtue of its many natural attractions and special ethnic cultures, which has greatly boosted the local economy (Zhang, 2018). When the cultural and artistic characteristics of the Yi community, which have been passed down from generation to generation, are externalised to society, the evolution of Yi lacquerware and even the trend of integration with modern society become more obvious. However, in the more purely Yi populated areas such as Liangshan, where more folklore, lifestyle and religious beliefs are still preserved, the demand for lacquerware utility ware is also more limited at the present time. What's more, this kind of local Yi ethnic group has been compatible with and influenced by Dafang, and even did not retain a lot of their own unique ethnic culture of the region, the local lacquerware practical demand is basically no, the consumer market and the group is basically outside, so can only consider the external consumer groups, lacquerware, the external artistic characteristics of the changes are also inevitable.

To sum up, the formation of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in the two regions is the result of the combined effect of many factors. Relevant factors such as geographical environment, cultural background, religious beliefs, living customs, aesthetic tendencies, and lacquerware production are intertwined, and together they have shaped the

unique lacquerware art of Liangshan and Dafang regions. This in-depth analysis provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the differences between the lacquerware cultures of the two regions, and offers useful references for future research and conservation work.

4.5.4 Innovation and Impact of the Research Findings

Research shows that there is a two-way relationship between Yi lacquerware artistic charecteristics and modern art design that influences each other. On the one hand, the knowledge in the field of modern art design can be applied to Yi lacquerware design so that it can show a new artistic charm in contemporary society. On the other hand, the study also points out that other modern art design disciplines can draw on and apply the elements of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics, thus expanding the innovative applications of these art design disciplines.

As an important platform for interpreting traditional ethnic motifs, modern art design not only builds a bridge between traditional and modern cultures, but also plays a key role in integrating traditional and contemporary cultures. In modern society, art design is not only the process of creating beauty, but also the carrier of cultural inheritance and innovation. By using the artistic elements of traditional Yi lacquerware in art design, designers form personalised design works while carrying the inheritance and interpretation of Yi lacquerware, prompting the national culture to take on a new vitality in the context of modern art design. This fusion not only expands the expression of traditional national culture, but also injects a richer and more diversified connotation into modern art design.

While the integration of Yi lacquerware into modern art design holds great potential, designers must also address the challenge of cultural sensitivity. In an

increasingly globalized market, the application of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics should be carefully balanced to ensure that it resonates with both local cultural identity and global audiences. This balance will be crucial for its long-term success in diverse markets.

The relationship between Yi lacquerware and modern design should be concerned with the external design expression and internal meaning value (factors). In this study, the combination of observation method and case study method is used to analyse how design thinking, as a scientific practical tool and thinking method, can achieve the value of making traditional handicrafts have sustainable development in order to get the corresponding design strategy, which can bring effective suggestions to Yi lacquerware industry and serve the local culture and economy. It can also bring inspiration and enlightenment to designers in different fields, which is conducive to the protection and promotion of national culture.

Craftsmen convey the connotation of their craft through their skills passed down from generation to generation. Modern design draws inspiration from the intrinsic qualities of traditional craftsmanship. Today's values are a continuation and recreation of the past. If modern design emphasises rational, systematic and logical ways of thinking, the combination with crafts undoubtedly puts more emphasis on emotional thinking and folk memories, highlighting the humanistic value of cultural heritage (Wu, 2021). If special attention is paid to local cultural heritage, then local craft industries in economically depressed areas or neglected areas may have a chance to recover. Therefore, crafts related to local culture have a significant advantage in coping with this situation. By fully incorporating the characteristics of local crafts and presenting products as authentically unique, it can be a strategy to develop areas to develop differentiated and personalised

products. (Tung, 2012). Future design strategies should take into account evolving market dynamics, where consumer preferences for authenticity, sustainability, and customization continue to rise. By understanding these trends, designers can create Yi lacquerware products that not only maintain their cultural essence but also align with contemporary demands, offering personalized and eco-friendly solutions that appeal to modern consumers. Collaboration and complementarity between designers and craft artists can help to create unique and recognisable designs in a globalised market, which in turn promotes craft heritage and innovation (Tung & Chen, 2013). These improvement initiatives are expected to further enhance the position of Yi lacquerware and related design products in the overall economic competition.

Taking in-depth study of the visual art characteristics of Yi lacquerware and understanding of its compositional forms and semantic connotations as a prerequisite, innovative design by lacquerware artists through combining the restructuring of modern art design is an effective path to broaden the development of Yi lacquerware in the modern society and implement sustainable development. Similarly, by extracting visual art elements and integrating them into graphic design, space design, product design and other modern art design fields, designers have given Yi lacquerware a new platform for the exhibition of its artistic characteristics, interpreting the new context and continuing the vitality of the national culture. While the integration of Yi lacquerware into modern art design has proven effective, future strategies should place greater emphasis on how to preserve and translate its intrinsic cultural meanings while meeting the needs of contemporary consumers. This approach will ensure that Yi lacquerware remains relevant in the modern market while fostering the continuation of cultural identity. In this design strategy, the core of sustainable value lies in continuous inheritance and innovation.

Lacquerware artists are able to rekindle the vitality of traditional Yi lacquerware by creating better quality lacquerware products and crafts through modern artistic design methods to meet the needs of modern people in terms of use and aesthetics. This mode of mutual cooperation and symbiosis makes the traditional values of Yi lacquerware take on a new life in modern society, and at the same time provides a solid foundation for its sustainable development.

Moreover, the process of combining traditional Yi lacquerware with modern art design methodologies is not only an artistic innovation but also an economic strategy. This hybrid model can create a competitive edge for Yi lacquerware in the global market while fostering regional economic development through the promotion of local craftsmanship.

Overall, this innovative design application has injected new vigour into Yi lacquerware in terms of aesthetic and cultural inheritance, and provided the possibility for it to find a wider range of application scenarios in contemporary society. This finding emphasises the importance and potential contribution of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design.

4.5.5 Limitations of the Study

Although the comparative study of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in Liangshan and Dafang reveals the differentiated manifestations of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in terms of compositional forms, stylistic evolution and formation causes, as well as potential prospects for modern art design applications in the two places, we need to recognise some limitations and challenges. Furthermore, the interpretation of Yi lacquerware's artistic characteristics is inherently influenced by its historical context, as cultural and artistic expressions may evolve over time. To mitigate this issue, the study

integrates historical literature reviews and expert consultations to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the historical semantics embedded within the artistic characteristics.

Firstly, for historical reasons, Yi lacquerware has a long history and its original ideas may have changed and there may be a loss of information, making this study more difficult in terms of investigation and sample collection. This situation may lead to the complexity of data collection and case collation and affect the objectivity of the data to some extent. In response to the potential biases caused by sample selection, the study employed a stratified sampling method, ensuring the inclusion of lacquerware pieces from different time periods, social contexts, and cultural subgroups. While this approach enhances representation, it is acknowledged that the diversity of Yi lacquerware across broader contexts may still not be fully captured.

Secondly, geographical limitation, the Yi region is so extensive that the workload of on-site investigation may be quite large, and only some representative areas were selected for the study, so the two Yi lacquerware styles and traditions that were focused on in the study may not be able to represent the diversity of Yi lacquerware as a whole, which may lead to omissions and incompleteness in the final results, and thus the limitation of the study may lead to the neglect of the diversity as a whole.

Once again, there are linguistic limitations. The Yi language is ancient and obscure, and the language of each branch varies greatly, which may lead to communication barriers and make documentary research and interviews more difficult. There is the possibility of misrepresenting the true meaning, which may affect the correctness of the research expression to some extent. To address language barriers, the study involved

experts, including native Yi speakers, to cross-verify the translation and interpretation of key terms. This approach aimed to minimise misunderstandings and ensure the accurate representation of cultural semantics. However, due to the complexity of the Yi language, certain nuances may still present challenges.

Finally, changes and trends in modern art and design are dynamic and may change over time. Therefore, some of the conclusions and application suggestions drawn in the study may need to be continually adapted in the future to suit the evolving art and design environment.

In addition, although the study emphasises the innovative application of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society, the success of its practical application is also influenced by factors such as market demand, consumer preference and cultural acceptance. These external factors need to be considered comprehensively when promoting and landing applications to ensure that the design is not only artistic and cultural, but also meets the actual needs of the market. Moreover, the success of Yi lacquerware ' s integration into modern design depends on its adaptability to dynamic market conditions. Future research could benefit from a longitudinal approach to monitor evolving consumer preferences and cultural trends, providing timely updates to design strategies and ensuring sustained relevance in a globalized market.

The above limitations need to be carefully considered in practical application to ensure that the research results can better contribute to the inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware in accordance with the time and place.

4.5.6 Future Research Directions

Future research directions can further deepen the thinking on the sustainable development of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware in contemporary society, and provide support and guidance for its more comprehensive and in-depth development. The following are possible future research directions:

Research on the innovative combination of modern technology and traditional lacquerware craftsmanship: research on how to combine with traditional Yi lacquerware craftsmanship with the help of modern technological means, such as digital design and 3D printing. Such research can promote the innovation of the craft and improve the production efficiency, while maintaining the uniqueness of Yi lacquerware artefacts.

Investigating the historical and religious contexts of decorative symbols can uncover hidden layers of meaning and inform the design process, providing a richer foundation for artistic and cultural interpretations. This will contribute to understanding how these symbols functioned historically and how they can evolve in modern applications.

Research on the relationship between the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware and the promotion of the local economy: to explore how to better integrate the participation of local resources in the design, production and sale of Yi lacquerware, and to promote its sustainable development, which not only better protects and passes on the traditional craft, but also creates economic value for the local community.

Develop robust tools and methodologies for mitigating biases caused by language differences and historical information gaps, ensuring more accurate and comprehensive academic outcomes. By involving native Yi speakers and leveraging

advanced linguistic technologies, future studies can minimize cultural and semantic misunderstandings.

Research on the relationship between Yi lacquerware and the market: to study the performance and acceptance of Yi lacquerware in the market, and to explore the balance between traditional handicrafts and market demand. By gaining a deeper understanding of contemporary society's demand for lacquerware artefacts, design practice can be better guided to ensure that Yi lacquerware not only develops on an artistic level, but also becomes competitive on a commercial level.

By combining modern immersive technologies with Yi lacquerware's craftsmanship, future research can enhance cultural experiences and educational outreach, enabling broader cultural appreciation and participation. For example, VR can simulate traditional lacquerware production processes, while AR can provide interactive displays for museums and exhibitions.

Combining methodologies from anthropology, sociology, art history, and digital humanities can create new models for studying cultural heritage and its transmission. For instance, integrating ethnographic fieldwork with data visualization techniques could provide a multidimensional view of Yi lacquerware's evolution and significance.

Exploring how its cultural elements can be adapted for broader international markets while preserving authenticity ensures that Yi lacquerware achieves both cultural significance and global relevance. This involves studying cross-cultural aesthetic trends and developing universal design strategies to bridge cultural and artistic boundaries.

Interdisciplinary research: Further deepen the cooperation with other disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, marketing, etc., in order to fully understand the cultural and artistic background of Yi lacquerware and its influence in different fields. Interdisciplinary research helps us to understand the status and value of Yi lacquerware from multiple dimensions.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Liangshan and Dafang are both mountainous Yi settlements, where the geographical environment endows rich lacquer resources while forming barriers to communication with the outside world, coupled with the backwardness of the social system, which has long been in a state of underdeveloped productivity. The Dafang Yi, on the other hand, due to the influence of foreign cultures and religions, had a very serious phenomenon of Sinicisation, and by the time of the Republic of China, for example, they had made changes in speaking the Chinese language, giving Han names, and in their clothing, food, and living conditions (Pan, 1998). Therefore, in the artistic characteristics of lacquerware in the two regions, there are not only differences in the times, but also obvious regional differences, both in the traditional lacquerware and modern lacquerware, reflecting similarities and differences.

In terms of similarity, the traditional lacquerware artistic characteristics in both regions have typical Yi characteristics, although they are more prominent in Liangshan region, with clear inheritance vein and perfect visual samples, while in Dafang region, they are more implicit, lacking clear inheritance vein and perfect visual samples. As for modern lacquerware, the similarity is mainly manifested in the breaking of traditional visual characteristics, with more diverse mouldings, more complex combinations of

ornamentation, and richer colour relationships. However, the transformation of modern lacquerware in the Liangshan region is slower and more conservative, while the Dafang region is more rapid and radical.

In terms of differences, the differences in the artistic characteristics of traditional lacquerware are mainly reflected in the fact that the lacquerware in Liangshan region has an obvious form of ethnic uniqueness, i.e., the artistic characteristics contain only the elements of their own ethnicity, while the lacquerware in Dafang region shows a trend of ethnic integration, blending the artistic elements of the Yi, Han and even other ethnic groups. This difference is especially obvious in the visual representation of the appearance, including the moulding, the ornamentation and the colour. As for modern lacquerware, the lacquerware in the Liangshan region has less innovative design based on traditional artistic characteristics, maintaining the uniqueness and high recognisability of the artistic characteristics. On the contrary, the modern lacquerware in Dafang region is more open in design, good at borrowing and reconstructing, but also loses part of the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics as a result.

The reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware between these two regions can be traced back to the differences in geographic environment, the form of community settlement, socio-cultural background, religious influences, living customs, and aesthetic tendencies, etc. Firstly, the difference in geographical environment directly affects the production and consumption of lacquerware in the two regions, and has a far-reaching impact on shaping aesthetic concepts and artistic expressions. Secondly, the different forms of ethnic settlement have led to the direct influence of different ethnic cultures on the design and production of Yi lacquerware in the two regions. This has left

unique traces in the artistic characteristics and formed obvious regional differences. The social and cultural background is another key factor influencing the artistic style of Yi lacquerware. The greater openness and acceptance of foreign cultural influences in the Dafang region has led to a more diversified and integrated character of lacquerware art. Factors such as history, canonical texts and social structure, as components of culture, are reflected in the artistic characteristics of lacquerware. In addition, religious rituals and beliefs have also left their unique imprints on the art of lacquerware, lending a mysterious and profound connotation to the artistic characteristics. These factors are intertwined with each other and run through the development of lacquerware art in the two regions, forming the unique style of Yi lacquerware in different regions. A deep understanding of these deep-seated reasons helps to reveal the fundamental reasons for the differences in Yi lacquerware, and provides a more comprehensive and in-depth guidance for its application in modern art design. This study contributes significantly to the comparative analysis of Yi lacquerware by addressing gaps in existing research on its artistic characteristics across different regions. While previous studies have largely focused on the unique traits of lacquerware in individual regions, this research provides a systematic comparison of the Liangshan and Dafang regions. This comparison highlights the interplay of geographical isolation, cultural influences, and historical integration in shaping the artistic evolution of Yi lacquerware.

Furthermore, this study introduces an interdisciplinary research framework that combines fieldwork, historical literature analysis, and design experiments. This methodological approach not only ensures the reliability of the findings but also offers a model for future studies on ethnic arts and crafts, particularly in regions with diverse cultural and environmental contexts. Through in-depth analyses of these factors, the roots

of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics can be better grasped, and more in-depth theoretical support can be provided for the inheritance and innovation of lacquerware in modern design.

Ultimately, this study emphasises that the modern artistic design application of Yi lacquerware should be deeply rooted in the Yi cultural background, and take the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware as the basis of design. During the design process, it is necessary to deeply cognise these elements, clarify the design objectives, and complete the innovative design by cleverly recombining different cultural and artistic elements. This process aims to fully explain the cultural connotation of the design, deeply explore the intersection of traditional crafts and modern art, and give deeper meanings and unique expressions to the works. Through such research, it not only promotes the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware, but also injects new contexts and meanings into these elements in contemporary art design, realising the continued vitality and richness of traditional culture in the realm of modern art.

Future research could explore the potential of integrating Yi lacquerware elements into modern digital platforms, such as virtual reality and 3D modelling, to create immersive experiences for audiences worldwide. Additionally, the digitisation and virtual preservation of Yi lacquerware artifacts could form an accessible archive, promoting both academic research and public appreciation. Cross-disciplinary collaborations between anthropologists, designers, and technologists could further enrich this exploration, enabling innovative ways to balance traditional artistry with modern technological advancements.

Expanding the scope of research to include more detailed case studies from other Yi settlements could also deepen understanding of regional artistic variations. By

comparing Liangshan and Dafang lacquerware with similar art forms in neighbouring regions, scholars can uncover broader cultural and historical dynamics that influence artistic practices across ethnic groups.

These findings provide a profound and comprehensive perspective for understanding the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions. An in-depth comparison of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang reveals their deep-seated differences in geography, culture, and history, which not only reveal the differences in time and place, but also the unique development trajectory of traditional and modern lacquerware in terms of artistic characteristicss. This in-depth analysis helps to better understand the unique evolution process of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, and provides rich information for the in-depth excavation of Yi culture.

At the same time, these research results also make certain contributions to the protection and inheritance of Yi culture. By digging deeper into the deeper differences of Yi lacquerware, the uniqueness of this culture can be better grasped, providing a more precise direction for cultural protection and inheritance. By applying Yi lacquerware elements in modern art design, this culture will be spread in new ways, attracting more people to pay attention to and understand the rich connotation of Yi culture. Therefore, these studies are not only an exploration of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, but also provide profound insights for realising the organic combination of cultural inheritance and contemporary art innovation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the last chapter of this study, this doctoral research is summarised through the review of the whole text, the response to the research questions, the achievement of the research objectives, the research results and contributions, and the research shortcomings and prospects. In the previous research, the researcher systematically combed through the relevant literature, clearly chose the qualitative research method as the research method of this study, deeply observed and analysed the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang regions, compared and analysed the different performances of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in these two regions, and deeply explored the reasons for the formation of these differentiated performances. On this basis, combined with a detailed case study, the strategy of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design application is completed.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the whole text, review the process of the study, present the results and contributions, shortcomings and prospects of the study, and provide readers with a summary understanding of the comparative study of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang regions.

5.2 Full-text review

This study is divided into a total of five chapters.

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter, which comprehensively introduces the background of this study, presents the statement of the research problem, clarifies the research questions and research objectives, defines the scope of the study, and explains the significance of the study and the expected research results. In this chapter, we comprehensively examine the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, highlight the importance and significance of the study, and clarify the depth and breadth of what we are seeking. The systematic introduction provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the entire research project and lays the foundation for in-depth discussions in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 is the literature review chapter, and the literature review method mainly adopts the thematic classification method, with the help of existing literature, to classify the types of theoretical frameworks, the historical development of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, the craft process, the decorative methods, the artistic characteristics, and the design application. The origin, development history, and craft process of Yi lacquerware in the two regions are deeply analysed, with special attention paid to specific artistic characteristics such as moulding, ornamentation, and colour. On this basis, the comparative analysis of different themes reveals the similarities and differences between the Yi lacquerware of the two regions, as well as their application cases in modern art design. Finally, through the review and in-depth analysis of existing research literature, this chapter presents the researcher's views and opinions. The synthesis of the existing literature views and research findings results in a comprehensive comparative analysis that

highlights the uniqueness of Yi lacquerware in the two regions and demonstrates their rich expression in modern art design. The content of this chapter will help to guide and support the research process in the subsequent chapters, ensuring that a comprehensive comparative study of Yi lacquerware in the two regions will lead to profound and insightful conclusions.

Chapter 3 is the research methodology chapter, in which the researcher explicitly adopts a qualitative research methodology to gain a deeper understanding of and explore the similarities and differences between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang regions, as well as their causes. Guided by the theoretical frameworks of Iconography, Order Sense Analysis, Formal Analysis and Design-Driven Innovation, the integrated use of multiple methods such as literature research, field research, interviews, and case studies, as well as the corresponding process of data collection and analysis, are elaborated in detail. Qualitative research methods play a key role in this study, providing a powerful tool for an in-depth understanding of the cultural differences and commonalities that characterise Yi lacquerware art. This chapter is designed to ensure that a complete theoretical framework is constructed for this study and to provide sound research methodological support.

Chapter 4 is the findings and discussion chapter. The findings are compared with the research objectives. Firstly, the researcher conducts a detailed comparative analysis of the mouldings, ornamentation, and colours of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang to reveal the specific differences in their artistic characteristics, and to dig deeper into the diversified artistic style manifestations of Yi lacquerware in different regions. Then, the researcher explores the root causes of these differences, examining the environment, ethnic

groups, culture, religion, customs aesthetics, etc., to comprehensively interpret the deep-seated causes of the differences in the artistic characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang lacquerware. Finally, the researcher analyses the specific case of integrating the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware with modern art design methods to explore its application strategies in modern art design. The definition of Yi lacquerware, the findings and results of the study, the limitations of the study, and the direction of future research are also analysed through discussion. Overall, a more comprehensive and in-depth comparative study on the art of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang is presented.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter, which summarises this doctoral research by reviewing the whole text, the research question response, the achievement of the research objectives, and highlighting the contribution of the main findings of the research to the existing literature and knowledge.

5.3 Response to Research Questions

The first research question is "What are the similarities and differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan, Sichuan, and Dafang, Guizhou?" The answer to this core question is crucial to the construction of the overall research framework of this study. Adopting a qualitative research methodology, the researcher has gained an in-depth understanding of the lacquerware craft traditions and collected visual samples from the two regions through literature research, fieldwork, and interviews, while carefully comparing the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions through systematic comparative analyses and the guidance of a theoretical framework. The aim is to reveal and analyse the homologies and differences between Yi lacquerware of the two regions in terms of moulding, ornamentation, and colour, which will help to promote

the readers' comprehensive understanding of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, lay a solid foundation for the subsequent research work, and provide theoretical guidance and practical experience for the whole study.

In addition to these artistic characteristics, the comparative analysis also provides insights into the regional cultural identities of Liangshan and Dafang, fostering a deeper understanding of how regional culture influences the artistic expressions of Yi lacquerware. This research aims to contribute not only to the field of lacquerware studies but also to broader cultural studies, adding to the understanding of how local traditions shape artistic forms.

The second research question is "What are the reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in these two regions?" Adopting qualitative research methods, the researcher digs deeper into the cultural, historical, and social reasons for the differences in Yi lacquerware in the two regions utilizing a literature review, fieldwork, and in-depth interviews. The differences in multiple factors such as environment and ethnic groups, culture and religion, customs, and aesthetics of the two regions are examined through comparative research methods to explore the fundamental reasons that lead to the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang. The answer to this question not only provides a solid theoretical foundation and empirical support for the subsequent research but also adds necessary academic theories to the literature on Yi lacquerware.

This inquiry also reveals how external factors, such as geopolitical history and socio-economic conditions, further influenced the artistic development of Yi lacquerware in both regions. Moreover, understanding these differences can help local communities and

policymakers address the challenges of cultural preservation and sustainable development in both regions.

The third research question is "How to promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society through the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design?" The ultimate aim of this study is to propose some effective strategies to promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society. Through an in-depth excavation of the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware, the researcher explores strategies for combining the traditional visual elements of lacquerware with modern artistic design approaches in the field of modern art design. Adopting a qualitative research methodology, combined with case studies and expert interviews, the researcher will propose innovative modern art design application strategies to promote the artistic heritage and market development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society. The in-depth discussion of this research question aims to provide a practical and feasible direction for the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in an innovative way.

Furthermore, the proposed strategies not only foster the economic sustainability of Yi lacquerware by promoting it in modern markets but also contribute to local community development through the creation of employment opportunities and cultural entrepreneurship. The application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern design is thus an effective tool for revitalising local economies and promoting cultural tourism.

Through the answers to the above questions, the researcher hopes that readers will be able to gain a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of the connections

and differences between the artistic characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware and provide inspiring thoughts on the sustainable development of this traditional craft in contemporary society. By incorporating these research findings into the broader discourse of cultural heritage preservation and modern design integration, the study aims to make a meaningful contribution to the sustainability and global relevance of Yi lacquerware in the 21st century.

5.4 Achievement of Research Objectives

The first research objective is "to identify the similarities and differences between the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions." In this study, there are two-time stages, traditional and modern: the Yi lacquerware that appeared in the period from the Ming Dynasty to the Republic of China is the scope of selection for the visual sample of traditional Yi lacquerware. From the establishment of the PRC to the present day, the new Yi lacquerware was selected as the visual sample of modern Yi lacquerware. The research object is the moulding, ornamentation, and colour of Yi lacquerware. At this stage, the content of research objective 1 was completed, providing a strong theoretical and empirical basis for a deeper understanding of the differentiation of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions.

Through the collection and screening of visual samples, the performance of visual characteristics of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two places and their inheritance methods and innovative interpretations were observed in depth and analysed in detail. The results of the study point out that the homology and similarity of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions are relatively small in terms of the visual samples that exist now, while the differences in terms of the shape of the

mouldings, ornamentation, and colours are relatively large. Liangshan Yi lacquerware has a very significant unique ethnic element, the artistic language of the Yi nationality is presented independently, and the traditional ware type is represented by the daily ware type, i.e. the most commonly used dining and drinking utensils, with rounded bellies and feet as the typical mouldings, but the forms are limited and relatively homogeneous. Weapons and instruments for Bimo's conjuration (religious wares) are complemented by non-everyday utensils, which are rigorously shaped and always the same. The symbolic meanings and associations represented by the ornamentation and colours remain unchanged for a long time, and even in modern times, most of the characteristic elements of Yi art will remain obvious. On the other hand, the traditional Yi lacquerware of Dafang is a fusion of diversified ethnic cultural elements, with a wide variety of types and mouldings, including not only daily utilities, weapons, and instruments for Bimo's conjuration but also other utilities and decorative utensils developed in the form of merchandise, which is very rich in shapes and forms. In particular, the decorations and colours are deeply influenced by Han Chinese culture, and the symbolic semantics and colour associations have also changed. Based on this, the overall decorative style of the former is mainly flat and abstract, and the composition form is orderly and regular. The latter, on the other hand, presents a decorative style that is both flat and three-dimensional, abstract and realistic, with more diverse compositional forms. In modern society, the relationship between the modern Yi lacquerware of the two places and the living customs culture, and religion are weakened a lot, and the moulding, ornamentation, and colour are also affected by the impact of modern cultural exchanges, and the innovation and metamorphosis are carried out to adapt to the way of life of the modern society and the aesthetic psychology of the people. However, in general, the artistic characteristics of Liangshan Yi lacquerware still present typical Yi

ethnic elements, with flat abstract decorative style and obvious visual recognition. On the other hand, the artistic characteristics of Dafang Yi lacquerware are the manifestation of the trend of fusion of multi-ethnic elements, with diversified decorative styles and weakening of the unique artistic elements of the Yi ethnic group.

The results of this research also underline the relevance of these artistic characteristics beyond academic analysis. The traditional and modern Yi lacquerware, as outlined in the study, are not only crucial cultural expressions but also carry significant potential to drive cultural tourism, contributing to local economies in both Liangshan and Dafang. By understanding the deep cultural roots and artistic uniqueness of Yi lacquerware, this study contributes to the development of local strategies for cultural preservation while promoting the economic revitalization of these regions. The combination of traditional artistic features with contemporary design applications has the potential to generate new avenues for economic development, including through crafts, tourism, and product innovation. This dual role—preserving culture and boosting economic growth—demonstrates the importance of incorporating the rich cultural heritage into modern economic strategies.

The second research objective is "to examine the reasons for the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions." According to the previous research objective, Liangshan and Dafang are both areas inhabited by the Yi ethnic group, and they are also famous lacquerware production areas. However, the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions are highly differentiated, which is related to the geographical environment and the form of community settlement, the socio-cultural background and religious influences, the living customs and aesthetic tendencies,

as well as other factors such as the lacquerware production process, the situation of individual craftsmen, the local policies and the development of the industry in the two regions. At this stage, the content of research objective 2 has been completed, providing a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for an in-depth investigation into the reasons for the differentiation of artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions.

The similarity between the geographical environment of the two regions lies in the fact that they are both rich in animal and plant resources, and lacquer trees are especially rich, which provides a prerequisite for the creation of lacquerware. Being in the same mountainous area, with a geographical space separated from the external environment, it is difficult for the Yi ethnic group to communicate with the outside world, forming a unique cultural background and artistic characteristics. The Liangshan region has long maintained this relatively closed state and was in a slave society, forming a single ethnic group living in a form that has lasted until modern times. Therefore, the production process of Yi lacquerware has been inherited from the family branches to continue the process, and its artistic characteristics have remained stable and unchanged. The Dafang area was originally a place inhabited by several ethnic minorities (only the Yi ethnic group was the largest), and entered a semi-feudal and semi-slave society during the Ming Dynasty, completing the form of integration and settlement with the Han Chinese, so the way of life, customs, and even culture and art were all deeply influenced by the Han Chinese. Lacquerware craft also actively learnt from the Han lacquerware craft, and the performance of its artistic characteristics is also diverse.

The research also contributes to our understanding of the relationship between Yi lacquerware and the community's cultural identity. In regions like Liangshan and

Dafang, where cultural diversity and historical factors have shaped the evolution of local crafts, this study sheds light on how these art forms serve as cultural symbols that reflect the community's identity and socio-political context. In particular, the study reveals how the unique ethnic identity of the Yi people, as preserved through their lacquerware, fosters a sense of community pride and belonging, essential for maintaining the social fabric in these rural areas.

As the Liangshan region is not influenced by other cultures, the inheritance of culture and art is consistent, and the influence of the Bimo religion is deep, so the Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in this area fully respect their own ethnic culture and art background, presenting the typical Yi aesthetic style and conforming to the living customs of the Yi people. As for the Dafang region, due to the environment of ethnic integration, the influence of multicultural exchanges has made the Yi people in this area have greater changes in cultural learning, lifestyle, religious beliefs, and aesthetic tendencies, which has led to a fusion of lacquerware artistic characteristics in this area and the gradual formation of a different form of lacquerware art.

In addition, the development of Yi lacquerware in the two regions nowadays is closely related to factors such as production techniques, individual craftsmen, local policies, and industrial development.

The third research objective is "to propose a strategy for the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design." According to the literature review and the findings and results of previous studies, it is clear that Yi lacquerware is facing a lot of difficulties in its preservation, inheritance, and development in modern society. The important goal of the research and application of Yi lacquerware artistic

characteristics is to find ways to promote the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society by using it as a visual innovation element. Taking the case study as the lead and combining it with interviews, the research found that combining the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware with modern artistic design methods, not only helps to improve the competitiveness of Yi lacquerware in the art market but also helps to find a wider range of applications in contemporary society, thus opening up a broader prospect for its sustainable development. At this stage, the content of research objective 3 is completed, and the establishment of the design strategy not only serves the field of art design but also provides implementable theoretical support for the sustainable inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware.

The findings of the study determined that there is a mutually advancing relationship between Yi lacquerware, as an excellent traditional handicraft, and modern art design. Applying the knowledge of modern art design to the innovative design of Yi lacquerware can give it a new lease of life in contemporary society, and at the same time, introducing the elements of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware into different art design disciplines can also promote the innovative application of art design in multiple fields. On this basis, the case study reveals that the innovative designs related to the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics are based on the design strategy framework of design goal-understanding, design conception-reorganisation, and design expression-interpretation to construct new design solutions. The reorganisation of design through the inheritance of Yi lacquerware elements is the most important and effective implementation method of the design strategy, which has been proven to be the key factor for the success of Yi lacquerware characteristics in modern art design applications. In the process of design restructuring, both lacquerware artists and designers can extract design

elements from the three aspects of Yi lacquerware, namely, moulding, ornamentation, and colour, as well as the symbolic semantics they represent, and use a variety of design compositional methods to form brand new reconstructed and derived elements. This approach not only helps to maintain the uniqueness of the traditional Yi lacquerware national culture but also provides design applications with innovative depth for contemporary society.

Furthermore, the study highlights the impact of modern art design practices on these traditional forms, noting that integrating Yi lacquerware into modern art design has the potential to revitalise local cultural practices while strengthening the community's cultural self-awareness. Moreover, the proposed strategies for applying the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in modern art design have practical applications that extend beyond the realm of art design alone. For instance, through strategic implementation across various design fields, these strategies can help bolster the cultural positioning of Yi lacquerware, enabling it to thrive in the modern market while retaining its traditional value. By incorporating Yi lacquerware elements into contemporary branding and product aesthetics, designers can create products that resonate with both local cultural identities and global consumers, thereby carving out a market niche that celebrates the fusion of tradition and innovation.

This study successfully achieves the above research objectives and provides a strong theoretical and empirical basis for related research on the artistic characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware. At the same time, it also provides practical design strategies for the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society and

provides strong theoretical support for researchers, lacquerware practitioners, and designers in related fields.

5.5 Research Findings and Contributions

The research achievements are mainly manifested in two aspects: firstly, in the comparative study, the researcher has analysed in detail the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions, including the similarities and differences in mouldings, ornamentation, and colours, as well as the deep-rooted reasons for these differences, which provides more specific and detailed theoretical support and empirical research on the cultural diversity presented by the art of Yi lacquerware in different regions, as well as giving appropriate additions to the literature and theory of the research in this field. Secondly, to inspire the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society, this study emphasises the importance of integrating the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware into modern art design and constructs a corresponding design strategy framework, which provides useful reflections on its innovative application. These results provide implementable theoretical support for the cultural heritage and development of Yi lacquerware.

This study's contributions extend beyond academic analysis, offering practical implications for the protection and promotion of Yi culture, particularly in the Liangshan and Dafang regions. The detailed exploration of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware provides a foundation for understanding the unique cultural significance of these art forms and their role in the broader cultural heritage of the Yi people. The findings can directly inform cultural policies aimed at preserving these traditional crafts while adapting them for contemporary use, ensuring that Yi lacquerware continues to thrive in

modern society. Additionally, the research opens avenues for fostering cultural tourism in Liangshan and Dafang, as it emphasizes the distinctiveness of Yi lacquerware and its potential for economic and cultural development through innovative applications.

This study has made a series of academic contributions based on an in-depth comparative study of the artistic characteristics of Liangshan and Dafang Yi lacquerware. Firstly, through a systematic comparative analysis of the mouldings, ornamentation, and colours of Yi lacquerware from the Liangshan region of Sichuan and the Dafang region of Guizhou, this dissertation provides a comprehensive and systematic analytical archive. This provides an important graphic resource for academics to gain a deep understanding of the plurality and regional differences of Yi lacquerware.

In addition, these research findings offer significant potential for influencing local economies in both regions. The integration of Yi lacquerware into contemporary art design can help local artisans access new markets and attract investment, thereby contributing to the economic revitalization of these areas. By aligning traditional crafts with modern design trends, Yi lacquerware has the opportunity to become a unique cultural product that can generate employment opportunities and stimulate local economic growth, all while promoting the cultural pride of the Yi people. This can lead to a more sustainable local economy by fostering tourism, craft industries, and design innovation, as well as contributing to the regional development strategies of Liangshan and Dafang.

Secondly, through the comparative study, the formation reasons behind the differences in the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the two regions are deeply explored, involving factors such as geographic environment, history of the ethnic groups, culture and religion, aesthetic customs, and industrial situation. This is of great academic

significance for understanding the deep-rooted reasons for the formation of Yi lacquerware art and how these factors affect the characteristics of Yi lacquerware art.

Finally, through case studies and analyses of the application of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics in modern art design, this paper proposes implementable strategies for integrating Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics into modern art design, providing innovative design application suggestions for the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in contemporary society.

This study also emphasizes the importance of connecting traditional craftsmanship with modern design in a way that enhances the local identity and strengthens community ties. By incorporating Yi lacquerware into modern artistic practices, the study contributes to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Yi people while fostering a sense of pride and ownership among local communities. This, in turn, can create a sense of shared cultural responsibility, encouraging younger generations to engage with their traditional crafts and ensure their continuity. Additionally, by encouraging a connection between contemporary art and local cultural identity, this research fosters a sense of community pride and recognition, which is crucial for the continued social and cultural vitality of the Yi people in both regions.

Through the results of the comparative study, this dissertation provides practical design guidance and theoretical support for relevant researchers, lacquer practitioners, and designers. This has practical application value for promoting the inheritance and innovation of Yi lacquerware and its sustainable development in modern society.

5.6 Research Shortcomings and Prospects

Although this study has achieved certain research results, there are still some limitations. Firstly, affected by historical reasons, the original semantics assumed by Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics may have changed, and the loss of information may lead to a decrease in the objectivity of data analysis. Secondly, historical and geographical limitations make it difficult to select a representative sample that fully covers the entire diversity of Yi lacquerware. Finally, language barriers may lead to difficulties in documenting research and interviews, affecting the accuracy of research expression.

These limitations—specifically concerning sample size, geographical scope, and language barriers—may influence the generalisability and accuracy of the findings. The relatively small sample size and restricted geographical coverage can limit the applicability of the results, while language differences during data collection and interviews may lead to inconsistencies in expression and understanding, thus affecting the reliability of the data. Future research should seek to broaden the sample size and geographical range and implement more effective strategies to overcome language barriers, ensuring both the precision of data interpretation and the wider relevance of the study's conclusions.

To more effectively address these limitations, future research could consider the following methods:

i. Expanding Sample Size: Future research should aim to include a larger sample, potentially involving more specific categorisations, to capture a broader range of Yi lacquerware variations and their artistic characteristics.

ii. Increasing Geographical Coverage: To enhance geographical diversity, research should include more regions within Liangshan and Dafang, especially those that are relatively harder to access, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of Yi lacquerware traditions.

iii. Addressing Language Barriers: Language barriers could be mitigated by employing bilingual research assistants, using professional translators, or adopting more standardised interview procedures to reduce misunderstandings during data collection. Additionally, utilising digital tools to assist with transcription and analysis could improve consistency.

These approaches would help reduce the limitations present in this study and provide more reliable and generalisable findings for future research.

Future research can be carried out in the following aspects: firstly, to study how to combine traditional Yi lacquerware craftsmanship with the help of modern technological means, to promote the innovation of craftsmanship, and to improve production efficiency. Such research could further contribute to the sustainable development of Yi lacquerware by improving the industry's capacity to compete in contemporary markets. Secondly, deepen the research on the performance and acceptance of Yi lacquerware in the market, and explore the balance between traditional handicrafts and market demand. In particular, further studies should investigate how Yi lacquerware can be marketed to younger generations, particularly through digital platforms or global markets. This research could have a direct impact on the economic revitalisation of the regions of Liangshan and Dafang, strengthening the market positioning of Yi lacquerware while preserving its cultural integrity. Once again, the study of local resource participation and the sustainable

development of Yi lacquerware is an important direction, and the core driving force for the sustainable development of handicrafts is to have positive social and economic values. Future research could explore how local communities, artisans, and policymakers can collaborate to ensure the long-term survival and relevance of Yi lacquerware in the face of changing global and local demands. This includes investigating how Yi lacquerware can contribute to local economic revitalisation, generate employment opportunities, and become a sustainable source of income for local artisans. Finally, interdisciplinary research can help us understand the artistic and social value of Yi lacquerware more deeply. Such interdisciplinary approaches could include studies in cultural anthropology, economics, and sustainable design, which would allow researchers to consider Yi lacquerware not only as an art form but also as an essential part of the local cultural heritage and a driving force for social development.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This dissertation began with a comprehensive review of the history, production process, and artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan and Dafang regions. In the process, the researcher found that although the inheritance of Yi lacquerware painting techniques exists in both regions, there are different manifestations in terms of craftsmanship and artistic characteristics, especially the lacquerware's moulding, ornamentation, and colours show obvious visual differences. This prompted this study to systematically compare the artistic characteristics of these two regions and further examine the causes of the differentiation. In addition, in modern society, Yi lacquerware, as a form of traditional handicrafts, has been seeking an effective way of sustainable development, so the application of the previous research results for conversion is also a reflection of the

value of the study, particularly in bridging the gap between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design trends. This research emphasizes the importance of integrating traditional art forms with modern technological, aesthetic, and market demands, ensuring that Yi lacquerware not only retains its cultural significance but also thrives in a globalized market. To sum up, this research aims to obtain and interpret the data related to the comparative study of Yi lacquerware artistic characteristics and its application form in modern art design through the data collection and analysis stage and to discuss and interpret the results and findings. Finally, through the conclusions and recommendations, the main findings of the study are summarised and relevant suggestions for practice and future research are made. This research framework contributes to an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of Yi lacquerware art in different regions and the application strategies it forms in modern art and design. By proposing actionable design strategies, this study contributes not only to the academic field of cultural heritage preservation but also to practical innovation within the field of contemporary art design.

Through an in-depth exploration of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan and Dafang, this study aims to promote the innovative application and sustainable development of Yi lacquerware in modern society. In analysing the similarities and differences of Yi lacquerware, this study not only demonstrates the uniqueness of the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in different regions but also provides theoretical references for similar studies in the future. Furthermore, the research proposes design strategies for how traditional craftsmanship can be revitalized in modern settings, offering insights that could serve as a reference for other regional crafts facing similar challenges. Application methods and strategies for integrating the artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware into modern art design are also proposed to shed light on further enhancing

the influence of Yi lacquerware, exploring its value, and promoting its sustainable development. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on the balance between tradition and innovation, encouraging future research that bridges cultural heritage with modern art design practices.

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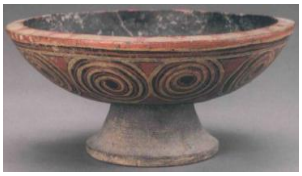
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APPDIENCES

Appendix A: Sample Charts

A.1 Visual Sample Chart – Traditional Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Liangshan Region

Traditional Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Liangshan Region		
Category	Image	Description
Tablewar and Wine Set		Circular Lacquer Food Pot with Coloured Years: the Republic of China Tableware. The inside of the wood pot is coated in black, the bottom of the outside is painted in black too. and the body is decorated with successive patterns of bull eyes in red and yellow.
		High-base Lacquer Helmet with Coloured Paintings Years: the Republic of China Tableware. Commonly, known as the "wood helmet". The inside of the wood Pot is painted in black. The outside is painted with the patterns of swirls, copper corns and grind in red and yellow.
		Low-base Lacquer Pot with Coloured Paintings Years: the Republic of China Tableware. Lathed from the whole wood. The pot has an outspread mouth, a shallow belly and a solid horn-shaped base. The bottom is painted in black, the inside is painted with the patterns of rays of sunlight in red and yellow. and the outside is painted with the patterns of swirls. Usually used to contain meat.
		High-base Lacquer Pot with Coloured Paintings Years: the Republic of China Tableware. It features an outspread mouth, a deep belly and a high horn-shaped base. The exterior is decorated with coloured patterns of eyes. Chicken intestines and nails. The pot is fit to contain staple food.
		Lacquer Leather Bowl with Coloured Years: the Republic of China Tableware. Made of leather. It has inclined walls, a square mouth and a circular bottom. The inside of the bowl is coated with red lacquer, and the exterior is painted with patterns in black, red and yellow.

		Lacquer Leather Bowl with Coloured Paintings Years: the Qing Dynasty Tableware. Made of leather. It features a square mouth. Inclined walls and a circular bottom. The inside of the bowl has coated with red lacquer, and the outside wall of the bowl has coloured paintings of patterns of dots. bull eyes and fern pattern. As the leather bowl is not resistant to high temperature, it is mainly used for holding cold foodstuff.
		Lacquer Wood Spoon Years: Contemporary Tableware. Used to spoon soup and rice.
		Flat Belly Lacquer Wine Pot with Coloured Paintings Years: the Qing Dynasty Wine set. The body of the pot is decorated with coloured paintings of the patterns of the sun rays. The pot is skillfully designed. The entire body is sealed with no pot lid. However, there are two holes both of the belly and the bottom., and a thin wood straw is inserted through the pot. When it is fled with wine, the pot is put upside down, and the wine would flow in from the wood straw at the bottom. The pot Is put straight when it is full. and the wine would not spill. The wood straw at the belly is used for drinking wine.
		Lacquer pot with Ball-shaped Belly with Coloured Painting Years: the Republic of China Wine set. The body is made of wood, the top is like a spire. the belly is in the shape of a ball, and the base is high and in the shape of a horn. The belly has four groups of four-petaled flower patterns in coloured paintings.
		Bird-shaped Eagle Claw Lacquer Wine Pot Years: Contemporary Wine set. Three-colour painted, featuring grids patterns, swirls patterns, and rapeseed patterns.
		Lacquer Wood Wine Ladle Years: the Republic of China Vessel of the Yi people for getting wine. It is made of wood and has lacquer coating. The base colour is black and red and yellow lacquer is used to paint patterns of four-petaled.
		Boat-shaped Leather Wine Bowl Years: the Qing Dynasty Wine set. It is made of cow leather and has lacquer coating. It is painted in black, red and yellow with the patterns of squares, waves, rapeseeds, birds, etc.

		Colourful Single-Handle Leather Wine Cup Year：Contemporary Wine set. Leather, Three-colour Painting.Used as a wine cup or wine ladle.
		Lacquer Wine Bowl with Low Base Years. the Republic of China Wine set. made of wood. It has lacquer coating. and the outside features coloured paintings of traditional patterns.
		A pair of Connected Lacquer Wine Cups Years: the Qing Dynasty Wine set. Lathed from the whole wood. The upper cup is connected with the lower cup, and they are used alternatively Its inside has black coating, and the outside is painted in red, blackand yellow with the patterns of fish eyes.
		Boat-shaped Lacquer Wine Bowl Years: the 1960s Wine set. The inside has black lacquer coating. The bottom colour of the outside is red, and it features coloured paintings of the insect motif.
		Wine Ox Horn with Coloured Paintings Years: the Qing Dynasty Wine set. It is made of ox horn, and is painted in black, red and yellow with the patterns of circles.
		Lacquer Wine Ram Horn Years: the Republic of China Wine set. It is made of ram horn and has lacquer coating. The base colour is black. And occasionally red and yellow stripes are painted.
		Eagle Claw Wine cup with Coloured Paintings of Four-petaled Flower Patterns Years: the Republic of China Wine set. The bowl made of wood, has red lacquer coating. and is decorated with coloured paintings of traditional patterns. The eagle claw is used as leg of the cup.
		Black Wild Boar Foot Wine Container Years: the Qing Dynastry Wine set. The hollow leather container is made by stripping off the bone, meat and hair from the forehoof of the wild boar. It is polished both inside and outside repeatedly and coated with lacquer.

Utensils for Daily Life		Lacquer Wood Container with Coloured Paintings Years: the Republic of China Storage utensil. Used to contain women's small objects, such as needle, thread and accessories. There are also larger-sized ones, which are often used to store various kinds of food.
		Circular Lacquer Dining Table Years: the Republic of China Furniture. Lathed from the whole wood. It has red. yellow and black coating, and its center is painted in several colours with the patterns of the sun. The traditional way of dinning for the Yi people designed to be low with stable circular base.
		Hand-Painted Wooden Cigarette Case Years: the Republic of China A container for storing tobacco leaves.
		Hand-Painted Lacquer Moon Lute Years：Contemporary a four-stringed plucked instrument with a full-moon-shaped sound box. Author: Jiwu Wuga
		Mouth String Years：Contemporary A traditional Yi ethnic instrument.
		Lacquer Saddle Years: the Republic of China Harness. Made of wood with coloured coating. The bare saddle is decorated with coloured paintings of traditional patterns. The pedal is made of wood, and the back leather strap is strung with bone beads.
Weapons		Black Lacquer Leather Armour with coloured Paintings Years: the Ming Dynasty Protective gears for weapon. It is composed of the front part and the back part. The upper of both of the pieces is composed of five leather pieces and connected with leather strops, featuring coloured paintings of the patterns of fire and rapeseeds, while the lower is sewn into an armor dress with five small pieces.

		Leather Shield with Patterns of the Sun Years: the Ming Dynasty Protective gears for weapon. The whole shield is coated with red, black and yellow lacquer. and is painted with patterns of the sun. There is. Leather strap fastened to the inside of the shield, and con belted to the left hand when the armor is used. Flexible for defense.
		Leather Wrist Guard Coated with Lacquer of colours Years: the Qing Dynasty Protective gears for weapon. The body is made of cow leather, whose thickness is about 0.5 cm. Hard and durable. People usually wear it on. the left arm when grasping the shied (while holding the sword with the right hand).
		Lacquer Quiver with coloured Paintings Years: the Republic of China Weapon accessory. Made of wood. It uses black lacquer as base colour, and red and yellow lacquer to paint patterns of four-petaled flowers. The YI people wear it at the waist to hold arrows.
		Ox-horn-shaped Powder Flask Years: the Republic of China Weapon accessory. The ox-horn-shaped flask, made of leather and wood, is pieced together with wood and has a cover. It is coated with black lacquer, and the whole body is painted with coloured patterns. It is hung at the waist and carried at all times.
Instruments for Bimo's Conjuration		Bimo's Divination Tube - Bimo Year：Uncertain Era Instruments for Bimo's conjuration. Made of wood, used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.
		Bimo's Ritual Horn Year：Uncertain Era Used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.
		Bimo's Ritual Fan Year：Uncertain Era Instruments for Bimo's conjuration. Made of bamboo and wood, used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.

A.2 Visual Sample Chart – Traditional Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Dafang Region

Traditional Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Dfang Region		
Category	Image	Description
Tablewar, Wine and Tea Set		Gourd-shaped Leather Lacquerware with Gold-painted Years: the Qing Dynasty Tableware. The appearance is in the shape of a gourd-shaped box, coated with black lacquer, with a straight line dividing it in the middle. Inside, there are several sets of cups, plates, bowls, dishes, spoon and tea sets , coated with red lacquer.
		Leather-lacquered Bowl Years: Contemporary Tableware. A bowl with a hidden flower technique.
		Lacquer Wine Pot with Coloured Paintings Years: Uncertain Era Wine set. The body of the pot is decorated with coloured paintings.
		Lacquer Wood Spoon Years: Uncertain Era Tableware. Used to spoon soup and rice.
Utensils for Daily Life		Lacquer Wood Container with Carving Patterns Years: the Qing Dynasty Storage utensil. Barrel-like. It has a cover and an annular knob, and the entire body Is decorated with coloured paintings of the patterns of flowers and the character of longevity.
		Wood Lamp with Coloured Lacquer Paintings Years: the Republic of China lighting utensil. It is composed of shallow dish. circular supporting pillar and circular supporting base.

		Gold-painted Pumpkin Shape Lacquer Box Years: the 1960s Storage utensil. Slip-off Mold Lacquerware, coated with red lacquer, used for storing items.
		Gold-painted Fan-shaped Lacquer Box Years: the 1960s Storage utensil. Slip-off Mold Lacquerware, coated with black lacquer used for storing items. Author: Chen Huijun
		Square Gilt Floral Storage Box Years: Uncertain Era Storage utensil. The entire lacquer box is painted with a black lacquer base and adorned with realistic floral patterns in colourful raised gold. It is a common type of small storage container.
		Leather Lacquer Tobacco Case Years: the 1960s Storage utensil. With a hidden flower technique, used for storing tobacco leaves, convenient for carrying.
		Lacquered Leather Tea Caddy Years: the 1960s Storage utensil. Coated with black lacquer, painted with colourful patterns, used for storing tea leaves.
		Painted Lacquered Wooden Tray Years: the 1960s Storage utensil. Made of wood, Black lacquered with coloured decoration, typically used for holding food, tea sets, or other items.
		Goose-shaped Lacquer Storage Box Years: Uncertain Era Storage utensil. Biomimetic design, mimicking a lifelike goose image, entirely painted with lacquer colours. Used for storing items such as tea leaves.

		Hand-Painted Lacquer Octagonal Moon Lute Year：Uncertain Era A four-stringed plucked instrument with a full-moon-shaped sound box.
		Six-Sided Lacquer Vase with Gilded Floral Motifs Year: the Qing Dynasty Decorative ornament. With a black base coat, the body of the vase is divided into six sides, each adorned with different gilded decorative floral patterns.
		Hand-painted Lacquer Vase Year: Contemporary Decorative ornament. The painted patterns are typical Chinese-style paintings. Author: Xia Minglang
		Leather-Covered Gourd with Gilt Decoration Year: Contemporary Decorative ornament. The decorative pattern is of traditional Chinese design. Author: Chen Huijun
		Hand-painted Lacquered Folding Screen Year: Contemporary Decorative ornament. The painted patterns are typical Chinese-style paintings.

Weapons		Ox Horn Gunpowder Flask Years: the Qing Dynasty Weapon. Made of buffalo horn, coated with plain lacquer.
Instruments for Bimo's Conjuration		Bimo's Divination Tube Years: the Qing Dynasty Instruments for Bimo's conjuration. Made of wood, used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.
		Bimo's Ritual Horn Year：the 1970's Used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.
		Bimo's Ritual Fan Years: the Qing Dynasty Instruments for Bimo's conjuration. Made of bamboo and wood, used during Bimo conjuration ceremonies.

A.3 Visual Sample Chart – Modern Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Liangshan Region

Modern Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Liangshan Region		
Category	Image	Description
Tableware, Wine, and Tea Sets		Hand-painted Lacquer Tableware Set Years: Contemporary Tableware set. While adhering to tradition in terms of shape, ornamentation, and colour, there are some variations in certain details.
		Hand-painted Lacquer Bowl, Spoon, and Tray Years: Contemporary Tableware set. While adhering to tradition in terms of shape, ornamentation, and colour, there are some variations in certain details.
		Lacquered High-Footed Plate Years: Contemporary Tableware set. In the handling of patterns and colours, there are some differences from traditional objects in the past.
		Hand-painted Lacquer Wine Set Years: Contemporary Wine set. The shape of the utensils has increased in layers compared to traditional ones, and the ornamentation has become more complex.
		Lacquer Wine Set Years: Contemporary Wine Set. Wooden Base. The wine flask features an innovative design, and the colour scheme is simplified. Author: Jiwu Wuqie

		Hand-painted Lacquered Tall Wine Cup Years: Contemporary Wine Set. The shape of this wine cup features an innovative design. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Lacquered and Painted Mongolian-style Wine Flask Years: Contemporary Wooden base. This type of wine utensil is modeled after the style of Mongolian leather wine accessories. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Lacquered Tea Set with Ceramic Base Years: Contemporary Tea set. This tea set is an example of cross-disciplinary collaboration. It combines the lacquer decoration technique of the Yi ethnic group with ceramic-making skills, resulting in a completely new product form. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
Vases and Decorative Ornaments		Hand-painted Lacquer Vase Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Suitable for home decoration, this is not found in traditional Liangshan Yi lacquerware types, and it belongs to an innovative design. Author: Jiwu Wuga
		Hand-painted Lacquer Vase Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Suitable for home decoration, this is not found in traditional Liangshan Yi lacquerware types, and it belongs to an innovative design. Author: Jiwu Wuga
		Lacquer Vase Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Suitable for home decoration, this is not found in traditional Liangshan Yi lacquerware types, and it belongs to an innovative design. Author: Jiwu Wuqie

		Hand-painted Lacquer Display Plate Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Belongs to an innovative form of utensil, with varied ornamentation and pictorial content. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Hand-painted Lacquer Display Plate Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Belongs to an innovative form of utensil, with varied ornamentation and pictorial content. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Hand-painted Lacquer Sheep Head Ornament Years: Contemporary Decorative ornament. Belongs to an innovative form of utensil, with varied ornamentation and pictorial content. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Lacquered Bird-shaped Ornament Years: Contemporary The shape is very similar to traditional bird-shaped wine utensils, but there is innovation in form, ornamentation, and colour. It has moved away from the functional aspects of practical utensils. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
Cultural and Creative Products		Round Lacquered Storage Box Years: Contemporary Storage container. The shape is relatively novel. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Square Lacquered Storage Box Year: Contemporary Storage container. The shape is relatively novel.
		Lacquer Tray Year: Contemporary A type of utensil developed in modern times.

		Round and Oval Lacquer Trays Year: Contemporary A type of utensil developed in modern times.
		Lacquer Ashtray Year: Contemporary Available in wooden and porcelain bases. Represents creative cultural products in the utility category, including items such as fruit trays, tissue boxes, toothpick holders, jewelry boxes, and more. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Lacquered Wooden Bracelet and Mirror Year: Contemporary Jewelry category. Represents creative cultural products in the jewelry category, including items such as combs, necklaces, earrings, pendants, and more. Author: Jiwu Wuga
Furniture and Home Decoration		Hand-painted Lacquer Table and Chair Set Year: Contemporary Furniture. Modern furniture of the Yi ethnic group. Some themed restaurants also commonly use this type of furniture.The ornamentation and colours on the surface remain consistent or close to traditional Yi lacquerware. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Hand-painted Lacquered Square Tea Table Year: Contemporary Modern furniture of the Yi ethnic group. The ornamentation and colours on the surface remain consistent or close to traditional Yi lacquerware. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Hand-painted Lacquered Round Side Table Year: Contemporary Modern furniture of the Yi ethnic group. The ornamentation and colours on the surface remain consistent or close to traditional Yi lacquerware. Author: Jiwu Wuqie

		Hand-painted Lacquered Home Decorative Panel Year: Contemporary More commonly used in specialty restaurants, hotels, and shops, less frequently used in ordinary residential households. Author: Jiwu Wuqie
		Hand-painted Lacquered Ox-Head Bracket Set Year: Contemporary Used for architectural exterior decoration. Now it is widely used in Yi ethnic dwellings and distinctive buildings in the Liangshan region.

A.4 Visual Sample Chart – Modern Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Dafang Region

Modern Yi Lacquerware Visual Sample Chart: Dfang Region		
Category	Image	Description
Tableware, Wine, and Tea Sets		Tasting Wine Pot Years: Contemporary Win set. A type of popular drinking vessel used by multiple people simultaneously, prevalent in the Dafang region. It emerged in the last century. The ornamentation and colours are very modern.
		Immortal Wine Set Years: Contemporary Win set. It emerged in the last century. Typically made using the hidden flower technique.
		Side-handle teapot, teacups, and tea tray Years: Contemporary Apply lacquer coating to utensils made of other materials. Author: Gao Guangyou
		Lacquered Tea Canister Years: Contemporary Tea Leaf Storage Container. Innovative modern design with rich textured ornamentation. Author: Gao Guangyou
		Lacquered Tea Utensils Years: Contemporary Tea sets. Author: Gao Guangyou
Vases and Decorative Ornaments		Hand-painted Lacquer Tray Years: Contemporary A relatively new decorative ornament. It features vibrant colours and realistic patterns. Author: Gao Guangyou

		Hand-painted Lacquered Large Vase Years: Contemporary Belonging to the traditional form of utensils in Dafang region, they are large in size, crafted with complex techniques, featuring realistic Chinese painting patterns and vibrant colours. Author: Xia Minglang
		Lacquered Vase with Abundance of Gold and Jade Years: Contemporary A vase with a highly modern design and decorative techniques. Author: Gao Guangyou
Cultural and Creative Products		Lacquered Go Game Box and Lacquered Go Board Years: Contemporary Cultural utensils that were very popular in the last century.
		Lacquered Paperweight Years: Contemporary Cultural utensils.
		Hand-painted Lacquered Ashtray Years: Contemporary Cultural and creative products. The ornamentation and colour matching are both innovative. Author: Gao Guangyou
		coloured Lacquer Liquor Packaging Box Years: Contemporary Customized products. Designed and crafted based on specific requirements, incorporating modern packaging design concepts. Author: Gao Guangyou

		Lacquered Business Card Holder and Lacquered Bookmark Year: Contemporary Cultural and creative products. Usually designed and created with the local cultural themes as the main inspiration." Author: Gao Guangyou
		Lacquered Heart-shaped Jewelry Box with Leather Base Year: Contemporary Small storage container. Modern design and decoration. Author: Gao Guangyou
		Lacquered Bangle Year: Contemporary Jewelry. Utilizing various lacquering techniques to present different textures and colours. Author: Gao Guangyou
Household Items, Furniture and Home Decoration		Lacquered Drum-shaped Box Year: Contemporary Storage container. Modeled after the shape of a Chinese drum as the design for the utensil. Author: Xia Minglang
		Hand-painted Lacquered Dining Table and Chair Set Year: Contemporary Typical Chinese-style furniture. The patterns feature traditional Chinese painting motifs. Author: Xia Minglang
		Lacquered and Hand-painted Round Tabletop Year: Contemporary Innovative Yi ethnic furniture. Both ornamentation and colours are creative.
		Hand-painted Lacquered Folding Screen Year: Contemporary Decorative ornament. The painted patterns are typical Chinese-style paintings.

Appendix B: Interview Records

B.1 Interview Transcript –liangshan Region

B.1.1 Interview Transcript – Yi Ethnic Lacquerware Artist, National Inheritor (Mr. Jiwu Wuqie, Liangshan Region)

First Interview

Date: September 23, 2021

Location: Yi Ethnic Lacquerware Workshop, Southwest Minzu University (Chengdu, Sichuan Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Historical development and artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan region

Q1: Could you introduce your experience in the industry?

A1: Our family has been making lacquerware for generations. I've been working in this field for nearly 60 years. I learned lacquerware making from my father and am now the only national-level inheritor. In the 1980s, I worked as a product developer and technical advisor at the state-run lacquerware factory in Xide. However, due to differences in business philosophy with the management and restrictions on craftsmanship from people with no experience, I decided to leave. After that, I went to teach Yi lacquerware making in Lijiang and Ninglang County in Yunnan Province, from 1985 to 1989, where I was in charge of production. Unfortunately, the factory closed after I left. At that time, the factory mainly produced daily-use items, particularly tableware, with a focus on practicality rather than decoration.

Q2: What is your main work now?

A2: At present, my main work is continuing to promote and teach traditional Yi lacquerware making methods, and I am still engaged in design creation. I have also trained many apprentices; about four to five hundred people have learned from me over the years. Currently, about a hundred people continue working in lacquerware making. I also collaborate across industries, such as working with the ceramic industry in Jianshui County, Yunnan.

Q3: Could you briefly introduce the historical evolution of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan?

A3: Yi lacquerware dates back over 1,000 years. In the early stages, it was primarily used for religious rituals, such as offering containers for sacrificial ceremonies. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, with the changes in social life, the use of lacquerware expanded, becoming more common in daily life. Now, in Liangshan, the focus of lacquerware production is still on decoration, with the style becoming increasingly diverse.

Q4: What are the common usage scenarios for Yi lacquerware?

A4: The usage scenarios are actually similar to the past, primarily for daily use. There are many types of tableware and drinking vessels. However, in the past, different specifications were used according to social status—people couldn't just use them at will. Additionally, lacquerware is also used for religious and sacrificial purposes, which is very specific and closely related to the Yi people's Bimo religion.

Q5: Is the process of making Yi lacquerware in Liangshan complex?

A5: The complete process is quite complex, with about a dozen steps. But it's not as complicated as the processes for Han lacquerware. The production of wooden bases is simpler than for leather bases. Early lacquerware production was mainly to meet the needs of daily life. The area is suitable for the growth of lacquer trees, and our ancestors

discovered the benefits of lacquer—its durability, non-toxicity, and ability to prevent decay—so its use gradually expanded. While the process of making and applying lacquer is tedious, there are fewer decorative techniques. Natural lacquer dries slowly, so the production cycle is quite long. The ideal time for production is from June to September each year, which also limits the output.

Q6: What materials are commonly used for the bases of Yi lacquerware?

A6: Wood is the most common material, and the best is azalea wood. Leather was more common in the past, but it was not available to ordinary people; it was reserved for those of higher status. Ordinary families typically used wooden bodies because they are easier to carve, and the lacquer application doesn't require much attention—just a few coats of simple black lacquer would suffice. Sometimes, even uncoloured lacquer is used, but it can still be passed down for several generations. Hand-painted decorations on complete sets of lacquerware are often considered family heirlooms.

Q7: Is the main decorative technique for Yi lacquerware in Liangshan simply painting?

A7: Traditionally, the main technique is painting, with inlaying being relatively rare. The decorations are directly painted onto the finished lacquer base. For example, the brushes I use are made by myself. We mainly use these kinds of brushes to paint various patterns, which are unique to the Yi people. These brushes are made from the whiskers of wild goats, which have excellent flexibility, making it easy to paint smoothly. This is a very distinctive decorative method, and it's easy to distinguish Yi lacquerware because no other lacquerware uses a three-colour scheme to paint ethnic patterns.

Q8: What materials are used to make the traditional three-colour lacquer of Yi lacquerware?

A8: The red colour is made with cinnabar, the black is made with soot from cooking pots,

and the yellow is made with ochre. Cinnabar and ochre need to be purchased separately, while soot is easy to obtain and can be used in large quantities without issue.

Q9: What do you think are the unique artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware?

A9: The most unique feature is the combination of high feet and round bellies. This shape primarily satisfies practical functionality. In other words, the key is whether these daily-use items are functional. For example, tableware and drinking vessels come in many shapes, which are closely related to the Yi people's dining habits. In addition, the surface decoration often features traditional Yi geometric patterns and animal motifs, such as the sun and ox horns, which are common symbols in Yi culture.

Q10: What types of patterns are used for decoration?

A10: There are patterns related to plants, animals, mountains, rivers, the sun, the moon, and stars, as well as daily items like fire-striker patterns and fishing-net patterns. There are also totem-related motifs, such as dragons and eagles.

Q11: Do these patterns have specific symbolic meanings?

A11: Yes, most of them are symbolic of driving away evil spirits and bringing good fortune. Some also represent status and identity.

Q12: What are the main organizational forms of these patterns?

A12: The patterns are mostly individual or continuous. Some are large, single patterns, such as the sunburst motif commonly found on shields, which represent light and courage. However, more often, the patterns are continuous, with many Yi lacquerware pieces featuring layered arrangements of decorative patterns that create a rich visual effect, giving the viewer the impression of a complete painting.

Q13: Do the shapes of these lacquerware pieces have any distinctive proportional characteristics?

A13: Yes, these lacquerware pieces have distinctive proportional features, such as high feet. That is, the height of the upper and lower parts of the shape are almost equal. The common shapes are simple lines, mostly curves, with the overall design being symmetrical. Particularly, the round-bellied design creates a balanced visual effect while enhancing functionality. This shape is also suitable for mass production using wood carving techniques. They are typically used to make bowls, plates, and wine jugs—functional and easily mass-produced.

Q14: How does the functional need of lacquerware influence its design?

A14: Our lacquerware must meet our daily practical needs. The design of each piece is closely related to its daily use. For example, the high-foot design of wine jugs makes it easier to pour and handle, integrating functionality with aesthetics. The high feet on tableware are designed to facilitate the use of food placed on the ground, and the deep belly allows for larger capacity. Yi people prefer eating large pieces of meat.

Q15: Compared to lacquerware from other regions, what are the main differences of Yi lacquerware from Liangshan?

A15: Yi lacquerware from Liangshan emphasizes the use of ethnic symbols in its decoration, with a prominent combination of geometric patterns and natural elements. In contrast, lacquerware from other regions may focus more on realism or decoration. Additionally, Yi lacquerware is unique in its functional design; common items like tableware and wine vessels are not only practical but also used in important ceremonial occasions.

Q16: What is the inheritance system for lacquerware in Liangshan?

A16: In the past, lacquerware was primarily passed down through family lines in small-scale, handcraft-based inheritance, with no government intervention or guidance. This inheritance system relied on master-apprentice relationships within the family, and the craft was considered a valuable family asset, ensuring its continuity within the family. These crafts were often kept as family "secrets" and rarely shared with outsiders. This closed inheritance system preserved the uniqueness of the craft but also limited its broader development.

Q17: Has this inheritance model changed over time?

A17: Yes. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, state-run lacquerware factories were established. At that time, there were two in Liangshan, and I managed one of them. I broke away from the family-based inheritance system and shifted towards a more open model. Especially with the government's increasing focus on protecting intangible cultural heritage, lacquerware techniques are now passed down not only through family and master-apprentice relationships but also through collective training, school education, and cultural programs.

Q18: How did the establishment of state-run lacquerware factories help promote the development of the lacquerware industry?

A18: The government established state-run lacquerware factories to promote the industry. These factories mainly produced tableware and furniture, while also training a batch of professional talent, which created social and economic benefits.

Q19: What positive effects did these factories have on the development of the lacquerware industry?

A19: The establishment of these factories greatly improved the professional skill level of the lacquerware-making process and promoted the popularization of the craft. Through the systematic production of a variety of products, these factories attracted more consumers and created employment opportunities.

Q20: What are the negative impacts of this model?

A20: The main negative impact is that the factories, in their pursuit of economic profit, have ignored the principles of traditional craftsmanship. To reduce costs and increase production, harmful chemical lacquers were introduced, which caused irreversible damage to the aesthetic quality and health safety of traditional lacquerware. This disregard for traditional craftsmanship has weakened the core value of lacquerware culture.

Q21: What is the current state of lacquerware production in Liangshan?

A21: Currently, there are very few lacquerware factories in Liangshan. Most production still takes place in family workshops and small businesses. These mainly meet local demand, and some lacquerware is sold to other areas such as Lijiang and Chuxiong in Yunnan Province. Although the market scale has shrunk, there are still people who continue to inherit this traditional craft.

Q22: What specific measures has the government taken to support intangible cultural heritage projects?

A22: The government provides significant support for intangible cultural heritage projects, particularly in terms of funding. In addition to subsidies for the inheritors of intangible cultural heritage, there are also financial investments for specific projects. As inheritors, we not only receive financial support but also have the responsibility to undertake public

outreach and training tasks to help more people understand and learn traditional skills. Local governments are also promoting the construction of lacquerware factories to boost local economic development. However, if market regulation is not strengthened, the production environment for natural lacquer could be destroyed, which is a major concern.

Q23: What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Yi lacquerware in Liangshan today?

A23: The management of the market is still unregulated. Although some industry standards have been established, implementation and oversight are insufficient. The introduction of harmful chemical lacquers, in particular, has not only changed the texture and quality of traditional lacquerware but also posed health risks to both producers and users. Furthermore, this practice undermines the sustainability of traditional lacquerware techniques, causing some crafts to gradually lose their original artistic value and cultural significance.

Q24: What do you think should be the most important focus for the future inheritance and development of Yi lacquerware?

A24: I believe that the most important focus for future inheritance and development is maintaining the traditional techniques of Yi lacquerware while adapting to the demands of the modern market. The challenge is how to balance tradition and innovation. I hope more young people will engage with this craft and contribute their ideas for innovative lacquerware design. At the same time, protecting natural lacquer resources and strengthening market regulation to prevent the widespread use of chemical lacquers is crucial for future development. While I recognise the need for modern changes, I firmly believe in preserving traditional processes. Particularly in terms of cultural content, I cannot accept changes that do not align with Yi culture. I believe that lacquerware

production should uphold the original craftsmanship spirit while integrating some modern design innovations, but it must not undermine the cultural foundation of lacquerware.

Second Interview

Date: 20th October 2022

Location: Mr. Jiwu's Workshop (Xide County, Liangshan Prefecture)

Interview Method: Face-to-face Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Topic: The Application of Yi Lacquerware in Modern Art Design

Q1: Could you introduce the basic situation of your workshop?

A1: The workshop is currently small. I built it myself, with three floors: the first is for display, the second is for production, and the third is for drying and storage. When you entered the county, did you see a training centre? That's a workshop allocated to me by the county government, but I don't go there often. Later, you can also visit our new place in Xichang, where my son is running it. Let's go and see the exhibition hall first; it mainly displays my representative works, in various sizes.

Q2: Are these lacquer plates featuring human motifs, which are not typically found in traditional lacquerware designs, commonly seen?

A2: Yes, that's one of my innovations. For example, this is "Zhige Aru," a national hero in Yi culture. But this human figure is not something I made up; it comes from the Bimo scriptures' illustrations, which I incorporated into lacquerware design. However, this rather figurative figure actually follows the style of bold colour painting from Yunnan, where they depict ethnic minorities like the Bai, while we focus on the Yi people.

Q3: So, what's depicted on this lacquer plate? It seems like an animal?

A3: This is the "Mulong," our original creation. It's based on the Yi people's reverence for the eagle. The design combines the Yi totem worship legends, exaggerating and reconstructing the eagle's image, while replacing its feathers with traditional Yi clothing patterns.

Q4: This seems like quite a big innovation, doesn't it?

A4: Yes, it's a reimagined figure. I innovated on the eagle's image, preserving the core elements of Yi culture while integrating modern design concepts.

Q5: The pattern on this lacquer stool is quite unique. It doesn't look like a traditional motif—is it a new creation?

A5: Yes, this is a new design I created. It might look like a gear, but the inspiration actually comes from the traditional sun motif, such as the radial lines. However, it doesn't carry the symbolic meaning of the sun motif. The sun motif traditionally symbolises life, light, and power, while this pattern is an attempt to express a modern minimalist aesthetic.

Q6: Why did you choose such a design for the lacquer stool decoration?

A6: This design tries to combine traditional patterns with modern aesthetics to meet contemporary tastes, enhancing the sense of the era and innovation. Later, you can also have a look at the furniture in my living room upstairs; some of it directly uses traditional patterns while others feature reimagined designs, primarily intended for modern home decoration.

Q7: Does this pattern have any special cultural meaning?

A7: This pattern itself doesn't have specific cultural meaning. However, through formal innovation, it showcases the transformation and development of traditional craftsmanship

in a contemporary context. This type of decoration can also be understood as a modern interpretation of traditional motifs, conveying the idea of blending tradition with modernity in design.

Q8: Could these innovative patterns be extended to other lacquerware product designs?

A8: Yes, it's possible. This style can serve as a modern decorative language, applied to a broader range of lacquerware products. By blending and contrasting with traditional patterns, this type of design can further expand the expressive possibilities of lacquerware art, attracting more young people to appreciate and love traditional craftsmanship.

Q9: There are quite a few objects here that don't resemble traditional lacquerware shapes.

A9: Yes, for example, these vases. Traditional lacquerware doesn't have these decorative objects. To innovate and develop the market, I introduced lacquerware forms from other regions, but the decoration methods are still based on our own styles to maintain our craftsmanship and cultural uniqueness.

Q10: This tea set is very unique. What was the design inspiration?

A10: This is a collaboration with the Green Ceramic Base in Huili County, Liangshan Prefecture, using ceramic bases, which was also a challenge in terms of craftsmanship. The teapot's shape is inspired by traditional Han Chinese tea ware, but I innovated the decoration. In particular, I incorporated Yi lacquerware motifs into the design of Han Chinese tea ware, creating a fusion of Yi and Han cultures. You can see that I reorganised traditional lacquer patterns and integrated elements from Yi clothing, like the Eight Treasures pattern, which has rich symbolic significance in Yi culture. Also, I simplified the overall structure of the design, emphasising the contrast between lines and surfaces, creating a modern decorative style. The use of colour is also very deliberate; I used the traditional Yi black and red tones, which are also classic in Han Chinese lacquerware.

Q11: There are quite a few items here that are more in the realm of furniture and home décor. Are you exploring new product directions?

A11: Yes, it's an experimental approach, and it is indeed a direction for expansion. Many people visit here, and it provides a window to showcase the works. Although Yi lacquerware is excellent, how to preserve and develop it in modern society remains a significant challenge. We want to show that this ancient craft can be applied in many fields. The innovation of patterns can take many forms.

Q12: This is your workshop—it's not very large?

A12: Yes, it's a bit cramped for large-scale production. I mainly create small lacquered objects now. As I'm getting older, I produce less, mainly providing guidance and consultancy.

Q13: This is coloured lacquer, isn't it? The colours don't seem as bright as chemical lacquer?

A13: Yes, natural lacquer is like that—the purity is not as high. Chemical lacquer is different, but it's not environmentally friendly and the colours can be a bit gaudy. Let me show you a simple pattern. There are tricks to drawing continuous patterns, of course, but it requires practice to get it right.

Q14: This floor is for drying and storage?

A14: Yes. I'm not producing much right now. The boxes here contain the base layers, awaiting drying. It's almost November, and the drying process is slow, so it's not the best time to make lacquerware.

Q15: What do you think are the challenges in integrating traditional Yi lacquerware into new artistic forms?

A15: The main challenge lies in preserving traditional craftsmanship and Yi culture while meeting the aesthetic needs of modern people. Traditional Yi lacquerware involves meticulous craftsmanship and symbolic patterns, while modern aesthetics emphasise simplicity, functionality, and individuality. Therefore, in the process of innovation, we must avoid superficial patchwork and delve into the cultural connotations and symbolic meanings—this is quite a challenge. Lastly, material selection and the transmission of production techniques need to be closely considered. How to use modern materials while retaining the historical feel and traditional quality of lacquerware is both a technical and artistic test.

Q16: How does the high recognisability of Liangshan lacquerware inspire modern design?

A16: The high recognisability of Liangshan lacquerware offers abundant inspiration for modern design. Designers can extract unique patterns and colour schemes, combining them with modern materials and techniques to create products that both carry traditional cultural connotations and meet modern aesthetic needs. This fusion not only helps preserve traditional craftsmanship but also enhances its market competitiveness.

Q17: Could promoting Liangshan lacquerware help raise its recognition both domestically and internationally?

A17: Absolutely. Through exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and collaborations with modern design brands, more people can become familiar with and appreciate Liangshan lacquerware. Additionally, developing cultural and creative products and incorporating Liangshan lacquerware elements into everyday items would be an effective way to expand its influence. This could not only promote cultural transmission but also bring new economic vitality to the local lacquerware industry.

B.1.2 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Artisan, County-Level Inheritor (Mr. Li Haolei, Liangshan Region)

Date: September 24, 2021

Location: Yi Lacquerware Workshop, Southwest Minzu University (Chengdu, Sichuan Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: History and artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware in the Liangshan region

Q1: Could you briefly introduce your career experience?

A1: I am from Ganluo County in Liangshan Prefecture, and I am a county-level inheritor of Yi lacquerware. Our family has been making lacquerware for several generations. However, our family is somewhat different, as we are particularly skilled in making armor and related items.

Q2: Could you discuss the relationship between the design of Yi ethnic weapons and protective equipment and modern ergonomic theories?

A2: Certainly. The design of these items aligns well with modern ergonomic theories. Over time, due to the prolonged experience of warfare, the Yi people gradually optimized the shape and structure of these items to make them more comfortable and flexible, enhancing their functionality and ease of use.

Q3: What cultural significance do you think these items have?

A3: These items not only offer physical protection but also serve as symbols of identity and honour in Yi culture. In battle, they represent the value placed on life and the pursuit of martial arts. Each piece embodies the user's cultural background and traditional values.

Q4: Does this mean that these protective items also play a role in cultural rituals?

A4: Yes, indeed. Often, these items are used not only in combat but also in various cultural rituals, where they highlight the user's social status and honour. In these contexts, the presence of these items reinforces collective identity and cultural continuity.

Q5: Could you talk about the lacquer collection process used in Yi lacquerware production?

A5: The cost of lacquer collection is very high, so in regions like Ganluo, only three or four workshops can meet local demand. Increasingly, workshops are using synthetic lacquer rather than traditional natural lacquer, which has altered both the cost of production and the technical requirements. For example, lacquerware made with "Three Gorges" brand paint occupies a significant share of the market. Despite this, traditional craftsmanship and the use of natural lacquer are still considered key to preserving the quality of the lacquerware.

Q6: Could you describe the classic shapes and motifs in Yi lacquerware?

A6: The classic shape of Yi lacquerware is typically a high-footed, flat-bottomed design, which is common in Yi lacquerware. As for the motifs, they are generally arranged in a counterclockwise direction and are usually in odd numbers. These motifs can be classified into three categories: the first is the "recording" motif, which is rare and usually features independent patterns that tell a story or describe a situation; the second is the "auspicious" motif, symbolizing good luck and blessings; the third is the "evil-warding" motif, such as garlic clove patterns, which are meant to repel evil. The motifs in Yi lacquerware often carry deep cultural significance.

Q7: You mentioned that Yi lacquerware motifs have unique cultural meanings. Could you explain these symbolic meanings in more detail?

A7: Yes, Yi lacquerware motifs are not only decorative but also carry profound cultural symbolism. For example, the "Dewo" motif can only appear on items like skin bowls, armor, and saddles, symbolising harmony between heaven and earth and the cycle of life. Another common motif, the rooster pattern, represents the herald of the sun, calling it to rise and guiding it to set, which is closely linked to Yi sacrificial rituals. Other common motifs, such as sheep horn patterns and fern patterns, signify good fortune and blessings. Each design carries the Yi people's beliefs and cultural traditions.

Q8: Could you discuss the colours and materials used in Yi lacquerware in more detail?

A8: The colours in Yi culture typically follow a black-and-white colour scheme, which is closely related to Yi religious beliefs. Black is often associated with demons, while white represents good fortune. In lacquerware, religious items are mostly monochrome black, symbolising mystery and warding off evil. Daily utensils generally feature black, red, and yellow. The black colour, in particular, carries a unique significance, representing solemnity and authority, as black is considered noble in Yi culture. Red signifies the vitality and passion of life, while yellow represents light, beauty, and wealth. As for materials, traditional Yi lacquerware uses natural materials such as ox horn and sheep horn, with each material having a different status. For instance, yak horn is the highest grade, followed by water buffalo, yellow ox, sheep (white symbolises good fortune), and goat (black symbolises demons).

Q9: What is the current mode of inheritance for Yi lacquerware craftsmanship?

A9: The inheritance of Yi lacquerware remains primarily through family transmission and the apprentice system. In some areas, there are "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Schools"

projects, especially in ethnic schools, where traditional techniques are passed on. The apprentice system requires apprentices to undergo years of repetitive practice to accumulate experience, which helps maintain the purity of the traditional craft.

Q10: What is your view on the innovation and development of Yi lacquerware today?

A10: With the passage of time, modern lacquerware production places greater emphasis on visual aesthetics, rather than strictly adhering to the traditional rules and meanings of the motifs. Today, the focus of innovation is more on visual effects, with traditional motifs and their symbolic meanings taking a backseat to modern artistic design. In the past, lacquerware was more about recording and transmitting cultural information, but today, the design of lacquerware is more about visual appeal and market demand. Furthermore, with changes in the market, traditional lacquerware production methods are still preserved in small workshops, but they are increasingly being replaced by modern production technologies and synthetic lacquers.

Q11: Where is the market demand for Yi lacquerware concentrated?

A11: Currently, the market demand for Yi lacquerware is mainly concentrated in the Liangshan region, especially in counties such as Huìdōng, Huìlǐ, and Bùtuō, where it is mostly purchased by local Yi families. However, the application of lacquerware is no longer limited to traditional uses; it is increasingly used as a decorative item in guesthouses, restaurants, and public spaces in villages. The decorative aspect of lacquerware is gradually outweighing its practical use, and the sales channels have become more diversified. For example, in Bùtuō, there are dedicated lacquerware stores, while in other places, lacquerware is primarily sold in Yi clothing stores.

B.1.3 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Craftsman, Owner of Layiyuanyumtang Workshop (Ms. Jichai Agya, Liangshan Region)

Date: 25th September 2021

Location: Yi Lacquerware Workshop, Southwest Minzu University (Chengdu, Sichuan Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The production model of a self-operated lacquerware workshop

Q1: Could you introduce your professional experience?

A1: My husband Layi Xiaoping and I are Yi lacquerware artisans from Yuexi County, Liangshan Prefecture. We have our own lacquerware workshop called Layiyuanyumtang. My husband's family has been making lacquerware for several generations, and I have been learning the art of painting for ten years.

Q2: What types of lacquerware products do you mainly produce?

A2: We mainly produce tableware and decorative gifts, and we also make decorative patterns for furniture. Tableware and decorative items are the main part of our products, while the decorative patterns on furniture require us to hire designers. The locals often use these items, while in urban areas, they are mainly used for landscape decoration.

Q3: What is your lacquerware production and sales model like?

A3: We produce and sell lacquerware independently. Our production site covers about four to five acres, with around seven to eight people working, most of whom are family members or relatives.

Q4: What are your sales channels and regions?

A4: Our sales region is quite wide, and currently, there are no level restrictions. We mainly wholesale in Liangshan Prefecture. There are more than 100 Yi clothing stores in Yuexi County where our lacquerware products are sold.

Q5: How is lacquerware produced in your workshop?

A5: We buy ready-made wooden bodies from a woodworking factory. Some people are responsible for the base, others for applying the lacquer, some for painting, and others for polishing. It is a kind of assembly line division of labor. I personally only work on the painting part and do not participate in other processes.

Q6: How does the assembly line production model affect lacquerware production?

A6: It improves efficiency because each person's work is limited to a specific part. As long as we do our part well, everything works smoothly.

Q7: Is the lacquerware you produce original in design, such as in terms of molding and patterns?

A7: As for the innovation of patterns, we basically do not have it. We follow what our teachers taught us, and we just paint according to what we have learned. For special orders, we follow the specific requirements. We do not focus on design innovation. Our workshop is not big, so we don’t need to. Innovation is mainly focused on daily tools and items that Yi people did not previously use, especially in terms of shapes. My husband Layi Xiaoping takes care of the molding, but it's usually quite simple, not too complicated or varied. For Yi necessities like sacrificial tools and Bimo ritual implements, we do not change the patterns; these must remain traditional.

B.1.4 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Painter, Yi Zhi Yuan Cultural Company (Mr. Qumu Youri, Liangshan Region)

Date: 25th September 2021

Location: Yi Lacquerware Workshop, Southwest Minzu University (Chengdu, Sichuan Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Production status of Yi lacquerware painting company

Q1: Could you introduce your professional experience?

A1: I am a painter at "Yi Zhi Yuan" Cultural Company in Butuo County, Liangshan Prefecture. I started learning lacquer painting only a couple of years ago. Our company mainly creates lacquer paintings.

Q2: What types of lacquerware products do you mainly produce?

A2: Our lacquerware products mainly include furniture and lacquer paintings, both of which are innovatively designed. The patterns are often more figurative, and the colours are more varied, making them more diverse than traditional lacquerware.

Q3: Where is the main market for your products?

A3: The main markets are concentrated in Huidong County, Huili County, and Butuo County in Liangshan Prefecture. These areas have a larger volume of sales, and our products are also sold to other regions in Liangshan Prefecture.

Q4: Do your products emphasise traditional lacquerware elements?

A4: We focus more on innovative painting designs, with relatively few traditional elements. Most of the designs are based on the demand for modern decoration. We hope to use innovation to make lacquerware and lacquer paintings more in line with the aesthetic and

functional needs of modern people.

Q5: What are the main uses of lacquer paintings?

A5: The main use of lacquerware is for decoration, especially for interior decor, although some are also used for exterior architectural designs. With the development of modern design, lacquerware has gradually become a major decorative element in places like inns, restaurants, and village spaces.

B.1.5 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Product Business Owner, (Ms. Qumu Shiwu, Liangshan Region)

Date: 26th September 2021

Location: Yi Lacquerware Workshop, Southwest Minzu University (Chengdu, Sichuan Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Family lacquerware enterprise production operations and modern Yi lacquerware design development

Q1: Do you have any experience in Yi lacquerware production?

A1: I don't. Our family started producing Yi lacquerware because my father worked in lacquerware production. He was an old employee of the state-run lacquerware factory in Zhaojue County and later set up his own factory. I mainly help my father with business operations.

Q2: Could you introduce the production and sales of your lacquerware?

A2: We have dedicated lacquerware stores in Zhaojue County and Xichang City. We operate as a family business, mainly producing daily-use items and furniture. We also

make decorations for inns and public spaces. In the past, the government used to order lacquerware as gifts, and our sales were mainly aimed at the mid-to-high-end market. Now, our products also include some market-oriented designs, with a special focus on preserving ethnic cultural features.

Q3: How do you position your lacquerware products in the market?

A3: Our products are mainly positioned as mid-to-high-end functional items, with a strong emphasis on preserving ethnic cultural features. We consider market demand but also remain responsible for preserving and passing down culture. We also registered the "Yi Sancai" lacquerware brand, and promoting the ethnic brand is one of our key goals.

Q4: How do you handle the inheritance and innovation of lacquerware?

A4: The inheritance of lacquerware is mainly carried out through the apprenticeship and worker systems. We also collaborate with some academic departments to set up experience centers. We have worked with professional designers to develop innovative patterns, aiming to combine traditional patterns with modern design. However, the results of these collaborations didn’t meet our expectations, and we have yet to create fully developed pieces. As a result, the collaboration was eventually terminated. In the future, we may need to strengthen cooperation with professional designers to better promote our brand and expand the market.

Q5: How do you use natural lacquer and chemical lacquer?

A5: In production, we use both natural lacquer and chemical lacquer. Natural lacquer is used in traditional products, while chemical lacquer is mainly applied to the parts with higher market demand. This market-oriented approach helps us maintain tradition while better meeting the needs of modern production.

Q6: How do you view the future of lacquerware culture?

A6: I believe the future of lacquerware should find a balance between inheritance and innovation. We need to preserve the cultural features of Yi lacquerware, but we also need to incorporate innovative elements to meet modern market demands. Through brand promotion and design innovation, we can make more people understand and appreciate this traditional craft, while also contributing to its inheritance.

B.1.6 Interview Transcript – Yi Historian, Lacquerware Theorist, Yi Lacquerware Maker (Mr. Jiwu Yizuo, Liangshan Region)

Date: 20th June 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Historical development, artistic characteristics, and cultural relations of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan region.

Q1: How long have you been researching Liangshan Yi lacquerware?

A1: It's been nearly twenty years. Actually, I started by researching Yi cultural history, which led me to Yi lacquerware. Once I got into it, I found it fascinating and decided to learn more about the craft of Yi lacquerware making.

Q2: Could the history of Yi lacquerware be described?

A2: In my research, I believe Yi lacquerware actually shares a lineage with the lacquerware from the prehistoric and Qin-Han periods. This connection can be traced through the Yi language family, as our studies show that there are many remnants of Chu-

Han culture in Yi language and culture. Second, the Yi people in Guizhou began to accept Han rule during the Han Dynasty, which inevitably led to the influence of Han culture. Third, the geographical proximity between the Yi-populated areas and Han-populated areas has facilitated a continuous process of cultural integration. Finally, archaeological research supports this view—if you're interested, you can look up some specialized archaeological sources, such as museum reports, which provide a clear explanation. Also, the records in The Dading County System are quite clear. The ancient Yi literature from Liangshan and Guizhou also contains relevant descriptions. As for the exact origin of Yi lacquerware, there are several theories, but we generally adhere to the academic consensus. Historically, in Liangshan, the use of lacquerware was determined by class and status, with little variation. However, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, changes in social systems greatly altered the inheritance and production methods of lacquerware. For example, the traditional family-based inheritance system was broken, with the government taking a leading role, followed by the market economy, which expanded the scale and influence of lacquerware production.

Q3: Where do you think the cultural influence of Liangshan Yi lacquerware manifests?

A3: The influence of Yi lacquerware is mostly seen in our daily life, ethnic rituals, and folk art. For example, our dining and drinking vessels are found in every Yi household, and they are indispensable in rituals and religious ceremonies. The designs and colours of Yi lacquerware also influence various art fields. Domestically, Yi lacquerware's craftsmanship has been included in the national intangible cultural heritage list, and it has won numerous awards. It is also a visual embodiment of Yi culture. Internationally, our lacquerware frequently participates in cultural exchanges and exhibitions.

Q4: What is the status of the inheritance of Yi lacquerware craftsmanship in Liangshan?

A4: Currently, the main Yi lacquerware families in Liangshan include the Jiwu family, Baishi family, Lianzha family, and Shiyi family. Jiwu Wuqie is the only national-level inheritor, and he is the key representative for spreading the culture of Yi lacquerware.

Q5: Are there many types of Yi lacquerware in Liangshan?

A5: Yes, the most common types are dining and drinking vessels, but there are also weapons, horse gear, musical instruments, religious tools, and more recently, decorative items for buildings, home décor, and even cultural and creative products.

Q6: These items and their decorative patterns have specific names in Yi language, right? That must be hard to distinguish.

A6: Yes, it can be difficult for you, especially since there are different branches of Yi language. Museums have bilingual catalogues in Chinese and Yi language for reference. If you have trouble understanding, you can come to me for translation.

Q7: What types of patterns are there in Yi lacquerware?

A7: The patterns mainly come from the Yi people's understanding of and struggle with nature, closely tied to their traditional way of life and natural surroundings. Yi lacquerware symbols often represent natural landscapes, flora and fauna, and aspects of social life.

Q8: What are the typical patterns related to nature, and what do they symbolize?

A8: Nature-themed patterns include celestial motifs such as the sun, moon, and stars, as well as representations of mountains and rivers. These natural forms are simplified into geometric shapes, presenting an abstract beauty while reflecting the Yi people's reverence for nature. These patterns symbolize the cycles and harmony of the universe and nature,

and they are widely used in functional items, weapons, and decorative objects, embodying both cultural continuity and spiritual beliefs.

Q9: What are the characteristics of plant-themed patterns, and what do they represent?

A9: Plant-themed patterns are based on flowers, plants, and crops, often featuring intertwined curves that form dynamic and intricate aesthetic designs. These patterns originate from the Yi people's observations and interactions with nature, artistically expressing the desire for prosperity, harvest, and happiness. They are commonly found on drinking vessels, everyday items, and ornaments, forming an important visual language in Yi craftsmanship.

Q10: What are the characteristics of animal-themed patterns, and what do they represent?

A10: Animal patterns include both realistic depictions, like dragon motifs, though these are rare, and abstract geometric designs that focus on parts of animals, such as eyes and horns. These partial patterns are more common. The realistic motifs often stem from ancient Yi totemic beliefs, symbolizing power and protection, while the abstract animal motifs enhance the decorative effect. For example, some are used to ward off evil or serve ritualistic purposes, while others represent auspicious meanings.

Q11: Do the animal patterns in Yi lacquerware depict complete animal forms?

A11: Yi lacquerware animal patterns rarely depict full animal forms. The closest example is the snake pattern, but it takes the form of a short, thick "S" shape rather than a complete snake body. Most patterns focus on partial features of animals, such as combs of chickens, cow eyes, and fish eyes, which are symbolic representations.

Q12: What are some typical examples of patterns related to daily life, and what do they symbolize?

A12: Daily life-related patterns include fire strikers, spearheads, and copper coins, all transformed into decorative forms. The fire strikers pattern symbolizes reverence for fire, the spearhead pattern embodies martial spirit and hero worship, and the copper coin pattern represents wealth and happiness. These patterns are not only used on everyday objects but also as cultural symbols, reflecting Yi wisdom and social values.

Q13: What aesthetic qualities do you think Yi lacquerware patterns possess?

A13: First, symmetry and balance are key, as Yi philosophy embraces a simple dialectical aesthetic that believes in the coexistence of yin and yang. This is reflected in the design's emphasis on paired symmetry. Second, the designs have a grand and dignified quality, which aligns with our bold and open-minded national character. Third, the designs are flexible and intricate, with complex variations in points, lines, and surfaces. The compositions and meanings are unique and beautiful, reflecting our understanding of the universe and nature, as well as our totemic and religious beliefs. Lastly, the colours are vibrant, with the three primary colours derived from our living environment, also reflecting our symbolic understanding of colour.

Q14: What inspirations can these patterns provide for modern art design?

A14: The symbolic meanings and artistic forms of these patterns offer rich inspiration for modern art design. For example, natural, plant, or animal-themed motifs can be refined into modern decorative elements for fashion design, home products, or cultural and creative merchandise. This not only helps preserve and promote Yi culture but also gives traditional craftsmanship new vitality, meeting the aesthetic demands of contemporary consumers.

Q15: Could you explain the connection between Yi lacquerware and Yi folk culture?

A15: Certainly. Yi lacquerware is crafted with great care, especially in relation to Yi folk traditions. First, early Yi lacquerware was made by farmers or herders in their spare time, not by specialized craftsmen. Second, the colouring traditions of Yi lacquerware—before the 1980s, many dining and drinking vessels were black, or only the outer surface was black. Only precious items, like leather bowls, saddles, and eagle claw cups, were coloured. Additionally, ritual items like soul-calling tools were never painted inside. Armour is typically paired, with the male part painted red and the female part yellow, with colour differences between clans.

Third, different lacquerware items have different counting methods for gifting, selling, or usage. For example, dining plates and wine cups are counted in pairs, while armour and Bimo tools are counted individually. Bowls and ear cups can be counted singly or in pairs, and wooden spoons are bundled, five to a bundle. Fourth, lacquerware was portable, as early Yi people were nomadic, so lacquerware was highly prized and could not be discarded easily due to production limitations. Lastly, in traditional society, lacquerware was an essential part of Yi family wealth, playing roles in inheritance and distribution.

Finally, Yi lacquerware had a wide range of uses in rituals, celebrations, weddings, festivals, and hospitality, and its use was governed by detailed rules, forming part of the folk customs with cultural significance.

Q16: Do you think there are any differences between the Yi lacquerware of Liangshan and Dafang regions?

A16: The lacquerware from Dafang is more complex and sophisticated in terms of craftsmanship and decoration. It presents a more refined and elegant style. However, in terms of visual characteristics, it doesn't retain the pure essence of Yi lacquerware as seen

in Liangshan. In Liangshan, the visual features that reflect our ethnic elements are very distinct and unique, whereas Dafang's lacquerware has been influenced by other cultures and lacquerware traditions.

Q17: How do you perceive the current status of the lacquerware industry in Liangshan and Dafang?

A17: The lacquerware in Dafang has a deep cultural history, but today its production is more focused on cultural and creative products. Although there are inheritors like Gao Guang, the scale of production and the purity of the traditional craft have decreased, with most of the techniques at risk of extinction. Similarly, in Liangshan, the lacquerware made with pure soil lacquer and traditional techniques is rare. The main inheritors are concentrated in specific families, such as Jiwu Wuqie from Xide County and Baishi Fuji from Meigu County.

Q18: What is your view on the craftsmanship of Yi lacquerware in the market today, particularly cultural and creative lacquer products?

A18: The Yi lacquerware available in Liangshan’s market is often far removed from its traditional authenticity. Lacquerware made with pure soil lacquer and natural pigments is rare; most of the items are made with chemical lacquers and modern techniques. Only a few craftsmen and families, such as Jiwu’s Jiwu Wuqi and Jiwu Wuga, continue to pass down the traditional methods, and the transmission of lacquerware culture is facing severe challenges.

B.1.7 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Artist, Provincial Inheritor, Director of Liangshan Yi Zhiguang Ethnic Craft Co. Ltd. (Mr. Jiwu Wuga, Liangshan Region)

Date: October 23, 2022

Location: Yi Zhiguang Workshop (Xichang City, Liangshan)

Interview Method: Face-to-face Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Modern Design Applications of Yi Lacquerware in Liangshan

Q1: Could you briefly introduce your career background?

A1: I come from the Ji Wu family, which has a long tradition in lacquerware production. I learned lacquerware techniques from my father, Jiwu Wuqie, and later pursued further studies in the arts. Currently, I am mainly responsible for the management and operations of Yi Zhiguang Company.

Q2: The lacquerware pieces here seem to differ from traditional Yi lacquerware forms. Have there been any innovative design changes? What is the reason for this?

A2: Yes. The practicality of traditional Yi lacquerware has significantly diminished in modern society. Nowadays, decorative items are more popular in the market. Therefore, the development and design of new items are mainly driven by market demand, rather than traditional uses.

Q3: Could you introduce the artistic characteristics of the lacquered moon lute you designed and created?

A3: The innovation of this lacquered moon lute lies primarily in the breakthrough of both the shape and the ornamentation. In terms of shape, I departed from the traditional full circular design and created an asymmetrical and layered effect by carving out one side of

the body, which highlights a modern artistic form. The main patterns are based on traditional "fire striker" and "spring source" motifs, reconstructed into a unique heart-shaped pattern combination. However, these patterns retain their original basic shapes and symbolic meanings. Additionally, the use of red and yellow enhances the expressive power of the main patterns, while black and the natural wood colour complement the colour palette, creating a rich layering effect. This colour combination increases the visual impact of the lacquered moon lute.

Q4: Your main design innovation is to reconstruct traditional lacquerware elements, right?

A4: Yes, I believe this is a very promising approach. By injecting traditional craftsmanship with new vitality through design, the lacquerware becomes both a modern art piece and a cultural symbol. This dual characteristic greatly enhances its value in cultural transmission and art design.

Q5: Were there any challenges in the design process?

A5: Of course, there were challenges. A major challenge was how to integrate modern aesthetics while retaining the essence of traditional culture. Furthermore, redesigning the shape and reconstructing the patterns required a deep understanding of traditional culture, excellent technical skills, a sharp artistic eye, and creative thinking.

Q6: This tea tray is also quite special, with a colour scheme that differs from the traditional three-colour combination. How did you approach the design?

A6: Yes, that's quite noticeable. However, as you pointed out, the shape and patterns are also innovative. I drew inspiration from the shape of Han-style plates, using a square, shallow plate design with no base, blending elements from Han artifacts. In terms of patterns, I based them on traditional geometric designs from Yi lacquerware and

exaggerated their proportions and compositions to better align with modern aesthetic preferences. The most important design aspect, as you noted, is the use of a single green lacquer, breaking away from the traditional three-colour scheme of Yi lacquerware. This creates a simple, fresh visual impact, making the overall piece feel more contemporary.

Q7: What challenges did you encounter in the creative process?

A7: The biggest challenge in designing this tea tray was finding the balance between preserving the essence of Yi lacquerware traditions and combining them with modern design language. The innovation of colour and patterns had to respect tradition while pushing the boundaries to meet contemporary aesthetic standards.

Q8: How does your design style combine tradition and modernity?

A8: My design style follows the characteristics of traditional patterns but leans towards refinement and simplification, presenting them in a more modern and practical way.

Q9: How do traditional lacquerware patterns differ from modern ones?

A9: Traditional patterns are generally simpler and more direct, with clear and straightforward meanings, while modern patterns are often complex, involving more intricate combinations, distortions, and variations, which can make them harder to interpret.

Q10: What form do you think modern Yi lacquerware decorations focus on in terms of pattern organization?

A10: I believe modern Yi lacquerware decorations focus more on the graphic demand, aiming to highlight its typical visual characteristics. This allows viewers to instantly recognize its identity as a Yi cultural symbol. This approach enhances the visual impact and market appeal of the lacquerware, while also aligning with modern design aesthetic trends.

Q11: How does this design trend affect the symbolic meaning of decorative patterns?

A11: This shift towards visual appeal makes decorations increasingly focused on aesthetics rather than cultural meaning. In the past, many patterns had explicit religious or cultural functions, such as warding off evil or offering blessings. However, modern society places more emphasis on ornamental and practical functions, weakening or even eliminating the specific symbolic meanings of traditional patterns. The focus has shifted more towards visual and aesthetic effects, allowing modern lacquerware to become purely an art piece, surpassing its original functional roles.

Q12: In light of the weakening of pattern symbolism, how can lacquerware still retain its cultural attributes?

A12: Even if the symbolic meanings of patterns have weakened, lacquerware can still retain its cultural identity through its distinct pattern style and visual language. For example, the use of typical Yi colour schemes, geometric patterns, and traditional craftsmanship preserves the cultural identity in its form, maintaining its cultural attributes.

Q13: Is it possible to strengthen the symbolic meaning of patterns while still focusing on visual effects?

A13: This is absolutely possible. Designers can deeply explore the traditional cultural background, rediscover the symbolic meanings of patterns, and seamlessly incorporate them into modern designs. This way, the aesthetic needs of decoration can be met, while also conveying profound cultural significance, achieving a balance between visual appeal and cultural expression.

Q14: What are the common colours in modern lacquerware?

A14: In modern lacquerware, apart from traditional colours like black, red, and yellow, colours like cyan (blue and green) and white are also common. Some of these colours are inspired by the embroidery colour schemes in traditional Yi clothing. This colour combination reflects the unique aesthetics of Yi culture, offering more richness and layering, while also strengthening the sense of cultural heritage in modern lacquerware.

Q15: For future lacquerware designs, how do you think we should balance decoration and symbolism?

A15: Balancing decoration and symbolism requires attention to both design philosophy and craftsmanship. On one hand, a deep understanding and respect for Yi traditional culture are needed to innovate based on its foundation. On the other hand, modern design tools and techniques can be used to enhance the visual effects while cleverly embedding the symbolic meanings of traditional symbols, achieving a harmonious balance between decoration and cultural depth.

Q16: What challenges does your company face in its development?

A16: Our company faces a challenge in pricing, as we insist on using the traditional lacquer production process. Our target customer base is relatively niche, focusing on collectors, and we operate in a studio model, which limits our access to large orders.

Q17: In terms of the dissemination of Yi lacquerware, what do you think is the biggest difficulty?

A17: The biggest difficulty in disseminating Yi lacquerware is the impact of cultural differences, especially when trying to integrate it into other regions. Currently, Yi

lacquerware is mainly popular in Yi regions, with its market outside these areas mostly focused on tourist products.

Q18: How is Liangshan supporting the development of the intangible cultural heritage industry? What protection and development measures are in place?

A18: Liangshan has set up cultural management departments responsible for protecting the skills of traditional crafts like lacquerware and promoting industrial development. These measures not only reflect the importance placed on intangible cultural heritage but also provide a strong environment for the transmission and innovation of lacquerware and other crafts. Since 2022, Liangshan has invested approximately 300 million yuan annually in cultural development, with 3% to 10% of this funding directed toward supporting the intangible cultural heritage industry. These funds provide essential economic support for the protection, transmission, and innovation of related crafts.

Q19: What measures do you think should be taken to better preserve the artistic traditions of Yi lacquerware?

A19: I personally believe that introducing modern art design concepts is a good way to break through the limitations of lacquerware innovation. It's also essential to allow other fields of modern art design to fully utilize the artistic features and visual elements of Yi lacquerware. This cross-disciplinary mindset can help expand the art language of lacquerware and integrate it into a broader scope of modern art and design.

Q20: You mentioned introducing modern art design concepts. What exactly does this mean?

A20: Introducing modern art design concepts means incorporating contemporary art elements and design thinking into lacquerware creation, such as abstract expressionism, the use of modern materials, and functional aesthetics. This approach can break through the

formal and decorative limitations of traditional lacquerware, making it more aligned with contemporary aesthetics and imbuing it with new design vitality.

Q21: How can modern art design and Yi lacquerware combine to produce positive application effects?

A21: Modern art design can combine with the unique artistic features of Yi lacquerware to create cross-disciplinary design innovations. For example, combining traditional lacquerware elements with modern furniture, home decor, and fashion accessories not only broadens the application scenarios of lacquerware but also showcases its artistic charm in a wider range of modern design. In this way, Yi lacquerware can transcend its role as a traditional craft and integrate into modern art and life.

Q22: What role do designers play in the development of the industry?

A22: Introducing designers is crucial to pushing the industry forward, as they bring new creativity and vitality to traditional lacquerware. However, unique designs are not always suited to all usage habits, as seen with the Ma spoon in Yi dining utensils. I have seen a square-shaped Ma spoon design, but in practical use, it does not align with our eating habits at all. When innovating the design of such functional utensils, great caution is needed. Therefore, the responsibility of designers is immense when it comes to traditional innovation.

Q23: You mentioned that cross-industry design can promote the dissemination and recognition of lacquerware. Could you give specific examples?

A23: For instance, the decorative patterns of Yi lacquerware can be integrated with modern fashion elements to design ethnic-inspired jewelry or accessories, or these patterns can be applied to modern home design, such as wall decorations or furniture. Through these cross-

industry designs, lacquerware can not only enter the everyday lives of people but also increase its recognition in the global design community, promoting the international dissemination of Yi lacquerware.

Q24: The "painted lacquered ox-head bracket sets" seem to be a newer form of cross-industry application. What is its purpose?

A24: In the past, lacquerware patterns like the "wooden beam" and "ox head" were used primarily in the buildings of chieftain-level leaders. With migration and housing construction, these patterns gradually entered the homes of ordinary people, though they were still used relatively sparingly. The "painted lacquered ox-head bracket sets" play two roles in Liangshan Yi residences: one is as a cultural and religious symbol to ward off evil and disaster, and the other is as an ornament that enhances the aesthetic value of living spaces.

Q25: How do you think this cross-industry mindset will impact the long-term development of lacquerware?

A25: This mindset will have a profound impact on the long-term development of lacquerware. It not only promotes innovation within traditional crafts but also stimulates new design inspirations. It helps lacquerware art adapt to the needs of modern society and opens up wider markets. By integrating with modern art and design, lacquerware can continue to be passed down while gaining new vitality, enhancing its position in the cultural industry.

Q26: What are your thoughts on the prospects of cross-industry collaboration?

A26: I am optimistic about the prospects of cross-industry collaboration, especially collaborations with other industries like the Huli green pottery industry. The visual features

of lacquerware have great potential in many industries, particularly in everyday product design, such as the imitation of lacquerware decorative elements.

Q27: What are your views on the development of Yi lacquerware cultural and creative products?

A27: The development of cultural and creative products is an inevitable trend. The elements of Yi lacquerware can be widely applied in many areas, including Yi knives, jewelry, furniture, home decoration, bags, stationery, and toys.

B.2 Interview Transcript – Dafang Region

B.2.1 Interview Transcript – Yi Lacquerware Artist, Provincial Inheritor (Mr. Xia Minglang, Dafang Region)

First Interview

Date: January 25, 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The historical development and artistic characteristics of Yi lacquerware from Dafang Region

Q1: Could you briefly introduce your career?

A1: I learned lacquer art from my father, who was a craftsman at the Dafang State-owned Lacquerware Factory. I've been making lacquerware for over 30 years and am a provincial inheritor.

Q2: Compared to the Liangshan region, do you think the traditional lacquerware of Dafang region shares similar artistic characteristics?

A2: There are not many similarities between the traditional lacquerware of Dafang and Liangshan. Currently, only the Shexiang Museum displays some examples, but the quantity is too limited to directly compare the similarities.

Q3: Does this mean that there is no significant connection between these two regions?

A3: Personally, I think so, but that doesn't mean there is no connection. Decades ago, in a town near Dafang County, there was a street known as "Ma spoon Street," which sold Yi lacquerware utensils, such as long-handled wooden spoons. This area has always been home to the Yi ethnic group, but due to the early mix of multiple ethnic groups, the

formation of lacquerware here was more complex, with the most significant fusion being with the Han people.

Q4: What cultural exchanges and integrations has the lacquerware of Dafang experienced?

A4: The lacquerware of Dafang has gone through long-term exchanges and integrations with Han ethnic areas. This cultural blending not only influenced the design of lacquerware shapes but also promoted the development of craft techniques. Due to prolonged contact, especially during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Dafang lacquerware incorporated a large number of Han elements, particularly in ornamentations and production techniques, which laid the foundation for the uniqueness and refinement of Dafang lacquerware.

Q5: Is the craft of lacquerware production in Dafang complex?

A5: Yes, it is. The complexity mainly lies in several aspects. First, the design of the lacquerware shapes requires high precision; the fit of the shapes must meet certain standards. Secondly, the creation of lacquer layers is strictly inspected to ensure smoothness and uniformity. Additionally, Dafang lacquerware involves various decorative techniques such as inlay, carving, and texture creation, each with different material and technical requirements, all of which increase the difficulty and complexity of the craft.

Q6: How does the ornamentation of Dafang lacquerware reflect typical Han aesthetic characteristics?

A6: Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the decoration of Dafang lacquerware has gradually integrated Han aesthetic features, especially through the use of typical Chinese motifs of birds and flowers, as well as symbolic patterns with auspicious meanings. These decorations often present a figurative aesthetic style, emphasizing the reproduction of natural images and imbuing them with meanings of good fortune and wealth.

Q7: What types of patterns are found in Dafang lacquerware?

A7: These lacquerware patterns mainly originate from natural elements, including representations of animals, plants, and some directly influenced by traditional Chinese painting forms. The patterns are mostly depicted as concrete images.

Q8: Do these patterns have symbolic meanings?

A8: Yes, these patterns generally carry symbolic meanings consistent with those found in traditional Chinese culture, effectively conveying deeper cultural connotations through traditional symbolic methods. They often embody wishes for good fortune, blessings, longevity, and other positive aspirations. For example, the "Fu Shou" pattern symbolizes happiness and longevity, while the "Dragon and Phoenix" pattern represents harmony and a happy marriage. These patterns are influenced heavily by Han culture. The symbolic meanings of the patterns are often expressed directly through harmony, metonymy, wordplay, and symbolism. In actual application, whether for practical items or decorative ones, the patterns carry deep cultural and symbolic significance.

Q9: Dafang lacquerware patterns are quite diverse. What are the common compositional forms?

A9: Yes, common forms include unit patterns, independent patterns, appropriate patterns, and continuous patterns. Independent and functional patterns are the most diverse in types and forms, as the primary decorative patterns are usually these two types. Continuous patterns are used as auxiliary decorations. Of course, these patterns can be arranged in various ways through repetition, rotation, or symmetry to create more varied decorative effects. Continuous patterns are also used quite often, but they are typically auxiliary designs.

Q10: How are these patterns arranged?

A10: Independent patterns are usually centered around a single motif, which can take various forms, such as geometric shapes, animal or plant images, or abstract symbols. Appropriate patterns emphasize the combination of function and form, designed around specific parts of an object to complement its overall shape. If a pattern is both independent and functional, it will form a layout with a visual center. This layout attracts attention to the main motif, giving the overall decoration a focal point and a sense of depth. Continuous patterns typically appear in repeating forms, creating banded layouts with colour contrasts. These layouts include both coloured patterns and uncoloured parts but generally present a monochromatic appearance, reflecting a minimalist decorative beauty.

Q11: Is the colour scheme of Dafang lacquerware characterized by the five colours?

A11: In addition to the commonly mentioned five-colour scheme, there is also the typical black and red combination, often used for monochrome items and as a large area base colour. These colours have significant symbolic meaning in Chinese traditional culture. Black represents dignity and strength, while red symbolizes life and auspiciousness. This colour pairing makes the lacquerware both practical and rich in cultural connotations, a feature influenced by Han lacquerware. Additionally, the use of gold and silver colours often aligns with patterns of symbolic status, such as dragon and phoenix motifs. The colour schemes influenced by traditional Chinese painting are also commonly applied to decorative items.

Q12: Could you introduce the lacquerware market situation in Dafang during the early years of the People's Republic of China?

A12: At that time, lacquerware production and business mainly relied on the Dafang State-owned Lacquerware Factory. There were famous lacquerware products and artists. For

example, Xia Dexin was known for painting golden dragons, Wu Shizhong for peonies, Liu Keli for chrysanthemums, and Yang Chenglong for landscapes. These themes reflected their artistic interests and technical expertise. In the early years of the People's Republic of China, the Go board became a national bestseller, and many families purchased and used them. Additionally, lacquer vases became an important export product, generating a large amount of foreign currency for the country.

Q13: What is the current market situation for lacquerware in Dafang?

A13: Now, only about three to four lacquerware companies and workshops still engage in large-scale production in Dafang. The lacquerware industry has shifted towards meeting the demands of the tourism market and private collectors. The decorative function of lacquerware now far outweighs its practical use.

Q14: You mentioned that the decorative function of lacquerware is more significant now. How has this impacted the lacquerware industry?

A14: This shift means that the practical function of traditional lacquerware is gradually being diminished, while its value as art or a souvenir is increasing. This helps promote cultural heritage and enhances the collectible value of lacquerware, but it may also cause the craft to deviate from its original daily-use purpose.

Q15: What specific requirements does lacquerware design have to meet to satisfy the demands of the tourism market and private collectors?

A15: To attract tourists and collectors, lacquerware designs need to focus more on exquisite appearances and the expression of cultural symbols, using more complex decorative techniques, patterns and rich colours. At the same time, they must reflect regional characteristics and cultural significance to enhance their market appeal.

Q16: Does this industrial transformation pose challenges to the inheritance of traditional lacquerware craftsmanship?

A16: Yes, this transformation may lead to lacquerware production becoming more commercialized, with the core principles of traditional craftsmanship being overlooked. As the demand for practical use decreases, some traditional techniques may face the risk of being lost. Therefore, while pursuing commercialization, it is crucial to strengthen the protection and inheritance of traditional craftsmanship.

Q17: What historical changes have Dafang lacquerware undergone?

A17: Dafang lacquerware has experienced changes in its functional demands, which are closely related to lifestyle habits. For example, due to the custom of smoking tobacco leaves in the past, lacquer tobacco boxes became popular. However, as cigarette technology advanced, the market for lacquer tobacco boxes gradually disappeared. Recently, lacquer tobacco boxes have made a comeback, with many customers requesting custom-made ones. This is mainly because people are once again paying attention to traditional craftsmanship and culture. Lacquer tobacco boxes are no longer just practical tools but have become valuable art and craft items. Additionally, the appearance of wine-tasting pots in the 1980s was closely related to local drinking habits. Especially in Dafang, many ethnic groups, including the Yi, share wine through a drinking vessel, typically involving several people or even dozens of people drinking together. To accommodate this unique drinking style, a new type of drinking vessel, the wine-tasting pot, was created.

Second Interview

Date: 25th July 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: Innovation in the Design Application of Yi Lacquerware from Dafang Region

Q1: How do you view the application of traditional lacquerware in modern design?

A1: The application of traditional lacquerware in modern design has great potential. The key lies in retaining the traditional aesthetics while giving it new functions and uses. Through innovative design, traditional craftsmanship can be revitalised, while also adapting to the needs of modern life. I will show you one of my award-winning works, the drum-shaped storage box.

Q2: What is the core concept behind this innovative lacquerware design?

A2: The core concept is "balance between inheritance and innovation". I based the design on the traditional Chinese drum, transforming its hollow body into storage space and turning it into a practical storage box. This design preserves the aesthetic beauty of the traditional drum while adding functional value.

Q3: Why did you choose the Chinese drum as the design medium?

A3: The Chinese drum, as a traditional musical instrument, carries a strong cultural symbolic significance. However, it is not functional in everyday life. Through re-conceptualising and transforming its function, I hope to combine its traditional cultural value with modern practical functionality, giving this object new meaning.

Q4: How do you balance tradition and modernity in your design process?

A4: The key to balancing tradition and modernity lies in respecting the traditional form's beauty while employing modern design methods. I preserved the external features of the traditional drum and, through developing its space and functionality, achieved an organic integration of the traditional and modern.

Q5: What significance does this innovative design hold for the modern development of lacquerware?

A5: This innovative design demonstrates the diverse directions in which traditional lacquerware can evolve in the modern context. It not only continues the traditional craftsmanship but also recreates the cultural value of lacquerware, providing more possibilities for its application in contemporary society.

Q6: How do you think such designs contribute to promoting lacquerware culture?

A6: This type of design allows traditional lacquerware to be presented in a way that is more in line with modern life, attracting more young people to pay attention to and learn about lacquerware culture. At the same time, by incorporating practical functionality, lacquerware products become easier to enter the modern market and broaden their influence.

Q7: What challenges did you encounter in the process of realising this design innovation?

A7: The challenges mainly lie in transforming functionality while maintaining the harmony of the form's beauty. The design needs to meet modern practical demands without compromising the aesthetic characteristics of the traditional object. Moreover, how to ensure the product's recognition in the market is also a crucial issue to consider.

Q8: What is your future design direction?

A8: I hope to continue exploring more possibilities for traditional lacquerware in modern design, such as integrating different types of traditional objects into home furnishings, cultural and creative products, or other practical areas. Through cross-disciplinary collaboration and innovative design, I aim to make lacquerware play a more significant role in modern life.

B.2.2 Interview Transcript – Yi Ethnic Lacquerware Artist, Municipal Inheritor (Mr. Chen Huijun, Dafang Region)

First Interview

Date: 27th January 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The Historical Development and Artistic Characteristics of Yi Lacquerware in Dafang Region

Q1: Could you introduce your professional background?

A1: I've been working with lacquerware for over twenty years. I started as an apprentice. I had my own company when the market was good, but I closed it down when the market shrank. Now, I have a small workshop where I take orders and also train two apprentices.

Q2: Are there any lacquerware types in Dafang that are similar to those in Liangshan?

A2: If you're referring to the very typical Liangshan Yi-style lacquerware, as far as I know, there aren't any here. There are some tourist shops selling lacquerware, but most of them

are likely custom-made from Liangshan. Our lacquerware in Dafang is indeed Yi lacquerware, and although it has been produced here for a long time, it still follows the styles of the Ming and Qing dynasties, which are closer to Han lacquerware. The differences in style are quite significant. Perhaps only Gao Guangyou's lacquerware companies might produce some Yi-style pieces.

Q3: Could you briefly introduce the production characteristics and main product types of Dafang lacquerware?

A3: The production of Dafang lacquerware primarily involves the technique of hollowing, especially with leather bodies, using cowhide as the main material, although there is also some production with wood bodies, fabric bodies and paper bodies. In terms of design, it leans towards traditional styles, and figurative shapes are less common due to the complexity of the process. Our products include both practical items and decorative items, covering both daily use and artistic directions.

Q4: What are the main design features of traditional lacquerware vases from Dafang?

A4: The lacquerware vases from Dafang have rich and varied shapes, but they can generally be divided into two categories: geometric shapes and biomorphic shapes. The most common geometric shape is the cylindrical form, which has many variations in the details of the neck, body, and foot, such as twists, curves, and adjustments in proportion. The biomorphic shapes are mainly abstract re-creations of natural objects, with the gourd shape being a common example.

Q5: Can you discuss the characteristics of biomorphic shapes in Dafang lacquerware?

A5: In Dafang, the biomorphic shapes are mainly variations of pumpkin petals. The most common one is the gourd shape, which is very distinctive to the region. This shape is not only aesthetically pleasing but also offers unique functional advantages.

Q6: How do you incorporate these biomorphic shapes into your creative process?

A6: In my creative process, I consider both the practicality and aesthetics of these shapes. Through variations and innovations on the gourd shape, we can preserve tradition while making the products more suitable for modern life. Many of the lacquerware pieces I make are in the gourd shape, which not only carries positive connotations but also serves to pass on traditional forms. My award-winning work mainly consists of gourd-shaped vessels.

Q7: Why do you think the gourd shape is so important in the design of lacquerware in Dafang?

A7: The gourd is a symbol of auspiciousness and abundance in traditional Chinese culture. The lacquerware in Dafang is deeply influenced by local culture. It is related to the agricultural culture of the area and plays an important role in daily life, becoming an essential part of our everyday items.

Q8: What challenges do geometric and biomorphic shapes present in design and production?

A8: Geometric shapes require precision in lines and proportion, which demands high skill from the craftsmen. On the other hand, biomorphic shapes require more creativity and an understanding of natural forms, and the detailed carving and lacquer decoration can be more complex. Both types of designs have their own challenges, but they both reflect the fine craftsmanship and aesthetic value of Dafang lacquerware.

Q9: Is there anything unique about the colours and patterns in Dafang lacquerware design?

A9: In terms of colour, Dafang follows the tradition of five-colour matching. However, influenced by Han lacquerware, there is no fixed rule for colour, especially nowadays, where it largely depends on the preferences of each individual lacquerware maker. While the colours don’t have strict symbolic meanings, their combination and richness are

important visual characteristics. The patterns mainly feature traditional Chinese motifs, such as dragons, phoenixes, and flowers, which are inherited from the techniques passed down by my master. These designs not only resonate with the market but also maintain certain cultural characteristics.

Q10: How do you view the positioning of Dafang lacquerware as Yi lacquerware?

A10: The definition of Dafang lacquerware as Yi lacquerware is somewhat ambiguous and differs significantly from Liangshan lacquerware. This is mainly because Dafang is a multi-ethnic area, with a large mix of Han culture and other minority cultures. Additionally, after the establishment of the state-owned factory in 1958, the industrialisation of lacquerware promoted its development but also blurred its Yi ethnic characteristics. However, Dafang is a famous producer of raw lacquer, which gives it an advantage in the application for intangible cultural heritage recognition in ethnic regions.

Q11: Do you think the current development of the lacquerware industry in Dafang is well-supported by the government?

A11: Yes, the government supports it. There are policies and funding to help, and the lacquerware industry in Dafang has developed significantly. Traditional techniques have been effectively preserved and have also been innovated and upgraded through modern means. The market demand for lacquerware products is growing, and the social influence of lacquerware craftsmanship is gradually expanding.

Q12: What challenges do you think the inheritance and development of lacquerware techniques will face in the future?

A12: Despite the significant progress made in the inheritance and development of lacquerware techniques, there are still challenges, such as how to attract more young people to learn the craft, and how to preserve the core values of traditional techniques in

the process of modernisation. These issues need to be addressed through continued government support and collaborative efforts from all sectors of society.

Second Interview

Date: 6th October 2022

Location: Mr. Chen's Workshop (Dafang County, Guizhou Province)

Interview Method: Face-to-face Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: About the market and inheritance of Yi lacquerware in Dafang region

Q1: Mr. Chen, could you briefly introduce your lacquerware workshop?

A1: My workshop was self-built. It stores many lacquerware products that I made when I ran a company. These products were all made following traditional techniques.

Q2: How is your workshop currently operating? What plans do you have for inheritance?

A2: Our workshop mainly targets the custom and recommendation-based consumer market, and the apprentices work part-time. Despite this, I still insist on passing down traditional craftsmanship. I believe that only by transmitting traditional skills and cultural values to more people can we achieve the long-term development of lacquerware. It's a process that requires patience and investment, and I will continue to persevere.

Q3: What experiences do you have in handling orders?

A3: Our orders mainly come from customers who appreciate traditional craftsmanship, especially collectors. Some orders are made specifically for museums or cultural exhibitions. Since we insist on using natural lacquer, the cost is high, so our customer base is niche, but these clients really value the craftsmanship.

Q4: What challenges is the lacquerware industry in Dafang facing at the moment?

A4: The biggest challenge is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, which has led to a shrinking market. Additionally, there is a lack of industry standards, such as the use of chemical lacquers and industrial simplification in production, which poses significant challenges to the inheritance of traditional techniques and market competitiveness. Although the government provides some publicity and support, the results are not significant, and the effort needs to be strengthened.

Q5: What ideas and expectations do you have for the future development of lacquerware in Dafang?

A5: I believe that to revitalize Dafang lacquerware, we must focus on restoring traditional craftsmanship and maintaining distinctive features. At the same time, we should explore ways to integrate lacquerware into other industries, such as incorporating lacquerware decoration into urban construction, or exploring a customized high-end market. Although there are many challenges right now, as long as we maintain our confidence in the craftsmanship and continue our efforts, we will find a new path for development.

Q6: Could you discuss the development changes in lacquerware products in Dafang? What is the most obvious change?

A6: The most obvious change is in the trends of products, especially in terms of market sales. Traditional items, such as decorative pieces, are still doing well. However, practical items are struggling. For instance, luggage made from lacquerware has almost no market now; modern products are good, affordable, and come with plenty of choices. Similarly, funeral items like urns used to be sold, but now these have almost disappeared from the lacquerware market in our area—they simply don't sell anymore. You can see I still have many unsold products.

Q7: Why do you think the market for funeral products has gradually disappeared?

A7: With the development of times and changes in people's concepts, funeral culture and demand have shifted. In addition, there are more materials and types of products available on the market, so traditional lacquerware funeral products have gradually lost their market.

Q8: How do you view the current state of the lacquerware market?

A8: The lacquerware market is very competitive right now, with many people using chemical lacquers or industrial production to chase sales. I think this approach can reduce costs, but in the long run, it will cause lacquerware to lose its cultural value. I hope that by sticking to traditional techniques, I can set an example for the industry and help more people recognise the true charm of traditional craftsmanship.

Q9: Have you considered collaborating with modern designers?

A9: I haven't thought about that yet. I think the mindset of modern designers doesn't align with the philosophy of traditional craftsmen. If it's based on traditional craftsmanship with some minor improvements, I might consider it, but if it's a complete overhaul in design, I wouldn't accept it.

Q10: After the founding of the People's Republic of China, what changes have occurred in the inheritance system of the lacquerware industry in Dafang?

A10: The national and local governments have provided policy and financial support to the lacquerware industry in Dafang. This support includes the establishment of relevant regulations, setting up research institutions, and offering subsidies to intangible cultural heritage inheritors. These measures have greatly promoted the inheritance of lacquerware techniques and the prosperous development of the industry.

Q11: How have the establishment of research institutions promoted the inheritance of lacquerware techniques?

A11: The establishment of research institutions has provided a platform for the study and promotion of lacquerware techniques. These institutions are not only responsible for sorting and recording traditional skills, but also conduct training courses and organise skill exchange activities, providing more opportunities for young people to learn lacquerware techniques, thereby expanding the scope and influence of inheritance.

Q12: What role does the subsidy policy for intangible cultural heritage inheritors play?

A12: The subsidy policy provides economic support for inheritors, allowing them to focus on protecting and passing down their skills. Additionally, this policy has elevated the social status of inheritors, helping more people realise the importance of intangible heritage protection, which motivates the inheritors to be more active in their work.

B.2.3 Interview Transcript – Yi Ethnic Lacquerware Artist, Municipal-Level Inheritor, Manager of Gaoguang Lacquerware Co. Ltd. (Mr. Gao Yan, Dafang Region)

Date: July 30, 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: History and Modern Design Application of Yi Lacquerware in Dafang Region

Q1: Mr. Gao, are you of Yi ethnicity? Could you introduce your professional background?

A1: Yes, I am a native of Dafang and a member of the Yi ethnic group. I currently manage our family business, which is the largest lacquerware production company in the Dafang region. The company was founded by my father, and I was also trained by him.

Q2: Could you share the historical origins and development of Dafang lacquerware?

A2: The history of Dafang lacquerware can be traced back to the Eastern Han Dynasty, when the indigenous Yi people lived in the Shuixi area. During the Hongwu period of the Ming Dynasty, lacquerware craftsmanship gradually matured, particularly the development of lacquerware made with animal hides as the base. From the time when Lady Sexiang began offering lacquerware as tribute, Dafang lacquerware became a royal tribute item, continuing this tradition until the Qing Dynasty. The Yi people, who were the local rulers of Shuixi, actively embraced Han culture and promoted the evolution of cultural practices. This influence not only catered to the demand for tribute goods but also opened up broader markets, further advancing the lacquerware craft.

Q3: How is the Yi identity reflected in Dafang lacquerware?

A3: The Yi identity of Dafang lacquerware is quite distinct. First, the Yi people's early use of lacquerware laid the foundation for the craft, and subsequent techniques and processes have been derived from this. Even though the craft has been influenced by Han and other ethnic cultures, its core techniques remain a continuation of Yi traditions. Therefore, the identity of Dafang lacquerware is more about the craft and techniques, rather than just visual characteristics.

Q4: What are the unique characteristics of Dafang lacquerware's craftsmanship and materials?

A4: Our lacquerware craftsmanship is based on traditional techniques, but we also use a variety of materials depending on production needs and cost considerations. For example, lacquerware with a leather bodies accounts for about 40% of our production, while fabric and wood-bodies lacquerware make up about 60%. For mid- to low-end products, we often use synthetic lacquer (like cashew lacquer). The colour scheme of lacquerware is not confined to the traditional five-colour palette but is instead adapted according to the product's needs. Additionally, the patterns feature traditional Yi styles but also incorporate elements from other cultures, such as Han, Miao, Bouyi, and Shui ethnic groups.

Q5: What are the main differences between Dafang lacquerware and Liangshan lacquerware?

A5: The differences between Dafang lacquerware and Liangshan lacquerware are mainly rooted in cultural background and development paths. Dafang is a multi-ethnic region, deeply influenced by Han and other minority cultures, which is reflected in the diverse integration of patterns and techniques. In contrast, Liangshan lacquerware retains more primitive features, with high recognizability. The government in Liangshan has been

proactive in promoting the craft, which has made it more influential. Dafang lacquerware, on the other hand, is more focused on integration and marketization.

Q6: How is the market operation of Dafang lacquerware currently?

A6: Our company accounts for about half of the total annual sales of the Dafang lacquerware industry, which is worth over ten million yuan annually. Our sales model is primarily wholesale, with our company focusing on production and research, while wholesalers handle market sales. Product development is driven partly by customer orders and partly by our own R&D. Our company has a dedicated design department with two designers, and we have developed over 100 types of products. Cross-industry collaborations are one of our future directions, such as working with Maotai liquor packaging, folk musical instruments, and the soft furnishings industry.

Q7: What are the challenges currently faced by Dafang lacquerware?

A7: The main challenges include the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, limited local financial support, and the lack of sufficient industry development. Additionally, the overall size of the Dafang lacquerware industry is small, and its influence is not as strong as it could be. The trend of using chemical lacquer and industrialized processes also poses a challenge to the inheritance of traditional techniques.

Q8: Could you describe the development history of Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Co. Ltd.?

A8: Our company was established in July 2013 and expanded in April 2016, becoming Gaoguang Yi Lacquerware Development Co. Ltd. We are one of the most developed professional lacquerware companies in Dafang, and currently, we are the only Yi lacquerware producer known to have established a design studio. Our company has excelled in lacquerware craftsmanship R&D and production, playing an active role in the

improvement of the local lacquerware industry and the inheritance of lacquerware culture, while also injecting new vitality into the local economy.

Q9: Could you introduce the founder of the company and his role in inheritance?

A9: The founder, Mr. Gao Guangyou, is a provincial-level representative inheritor of the Yi lacquerware in Dafang County, Guizhou. He has made significant contributions to the inheritance and innovation of lacquerware craftsmanship and has led the company in continuously developing lacquerware products with unique artistic styles, injecting new meaning and vitality into the Dafang lacquerware culture.

Q10: What are the features and classifications of your company's lacquerware products?

A10: Our lacquerware product series covers both decorative crafts and practical items, with unique innovative designs in terms of shape, decoration, and colour. Among the decorative crafts, our lacquer vases are the most famous, with many innovative techniques and designs.

Q11: You mentioned the innovation in the decorative techniques of lacquer vases, could you explain further?

A11: Our company uses the unique "hidden flower technique" of Dafang lacquerware as the base colour pattern, and innovatively incorporates Yi script symbols as new decorative elements. This design preserves the traditional craftsmanship of Dafang lacquerware while adding a unique modern design charm.

Q12: What contributions has your company made to the promotion of local lacquerware culture and economic development?

A12: Through the development and production of innovative lacquerware products, our company has not only improved the overall level of the local lacquerware industry but also

played an important role in cultural inheritance. For example, our company's cultural creative product series has promoted the protection and inheritance of Yi lacquerware techniques while injecting new momentum into the promotion of local cultural brands and economic development. As the only company in the industry with a design studio, we have explored new directions for integrating modern lacquerware craftsmanship with traditional culture.

Q13: What are the company's plans for the future development of Dafang lacquerware?

A13: We plan to continue focusing on the R&D and innovation of lacquerware craftsmanship, especially exploring further the integration of traditional and modern designs. We also aim to expand our consumer base through stronger market promotion and increase our brand influence through social media and e-commerce platforms. Additionally, we will collaborate with other industries, such as packaging design, home decor, and soft furnishings, to expand the application and market space of Dafang lacquerware.

Q14: Why do you place so much emphasis on innovative design, and how can you ensure its success?

A14: Innovative design is crucial for us because it is an essential way to break through industry difficulties and expand the market. For businesses, design is indispensable; it can develop new products, maintain competitiveness, and generate economic benefits. Design is not only about innovating product appearance but also involves the combination of function, materials, and cultural elements, making products more aligned with market demand.

Q15: How do you ensure that your product designs are both innovative and meet market demands?

A15: First, we have a dedicated design team led by my brother, who is an art design major

with extensive experience. We also employ two professional designers who specialize in art design to oversee product development. The designers conduct market research and gather consumer feedback to inform product development, incorporating modern elements and practical functions into the designs. At the same time, we integrate traditional craftsmanship and cultural features to ensure that our products are both innovative and have market value. For instance, the design of shapes, patterns, and colours is adjusted according to the needs of different consumers, making it easier for our products to adapt to market changes.

Q16: Some of your product designs combine abstract geometric patterns with traditional symbolic patterns; what is the significance of this approach?

A16: We aim to innovate by applying traditional lacquerware elements in modern design. Abstract and geometric elements are more contemporary and have more layers, while symbolic patterns maintain the deep cultural meaning of tradition. This design style not only preserves cultural elements but also creates a novel visual effect. This cross-traditional and modern design approach is suitable for home decor, fashion, and cultural creative products, meeting modern aesthetic needs while preserving cultural heritage.

Q17: Does your design integrate both traditional and modern elements? How is this achieved?

A17: Yes, in our design, we retain the unique patterns and traditional colour schemes of lacquerware while incorporating modern minimalist design and innovation. The decorative patterns include traditional figurative motifs, but we also boldly incorporate abstract textures and modern techniques to create a more contemporary visual effect. Moreover, in terms of colour matching, we use a free approach to combine traditional tones with modern trendy colours, making our design works both a continuation of ethnic cultural heritage and

in line with contemporary aesthetic demands. For example, in the production of lacquer bangles, we use multiple lacquerware techniques, such as eggshell inlays and textured lacquer surfaces. These techniques not only enrich the visual effect but also enhance the artistic value and tactile delicacy. Each piece's pattern design is carefully thought out, striving to strike a balance between traditional patterns and modern abstract designs, presenting a unique aesthetic and cultural connotation.

Q18: How does the colour scheme of modern Dafang Yi lacquerware differ from traditional lacquerware?

A18: It still stems from traditional five-colourism, rooted in the Yi people's unique understanding and application of colour, which is influenced by lacquerware crafting techniques. On the basis of traditional colour schemes, we have integrated modern colour trends, making the application of colour more diverse. It retains traditional elements while incorporating modern design aesthetics.

B.3 Interview Transcript – Art Designers

B.3.1 Interview Transcript – Ceramic Artist, Associate Professor at Xichang University (Ms. He Xia, Designer)

Date: 1st August 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The Application of Yi Ethnic Lacquerware in Modern Art Design

Q1: What cultural elements influence your design?

A1: My design is deeply influenced by the Yi culture of Liangshan, which is largely due to the unique geographical and cultural environment of Xichang University. The distinct art and cultural traditions of the Yi people have provided abundant inspiration for my creations, such as the "Hero Knot," Yi lacquerware patterns, and traditional costumes, which are all reflected in my designs.

Q2: How does your work embody the combination of Yi lacquerware culture and modern design?

A2: My design both honours the essence of Yi culture and simultaneously adapts traditional elements through modern design language. For instance, in my work The Hero Series, I drew inspiration from the Yi male headdress, the "Hero Knot," and incorporated the sunlight pattern from Yi warrior lacquered leather armour. At the same time, I reorganised and interpreted these traditional elements to align with contemporary aesthetic trends. For example, in the Beauty Jar Series, the form borrows from the high-footed round-bellied lacquerware of the Yi people, but I have adjusted the design with simple lines and natural colours to reflect modern minimalist design concepts.

Q3: What are the unique features of your Hero Series design?

A3: The Hero Series draws inspiration from the traditional Yi "Hero Knot" and lacquered leather armour. I abstracted the form of the Hero Knot and combined it with the sunlight pattern from Yi warrior armour, resulting in a continuous decorative pattern. I primarily used earthen tones and interspersed black and red to accentuate the hero’s image and sense of power, conveying the Yi culture's admiration for masculine strength and beauty.

Q4: What considerations did you make regarding functionality and cultural significance in the design of The Beauty Jar Series?

A4: The Beauty Jar Series is a functional item, where the form is inspired by the Yi people's traditional high-footed round-bellied lacquerware. I adapted the design to better suit the practical needs of contemporary life. In terms of decoration, I incorporated Yi lacquerware patterns and traditional costume motifs but reorganised and modernised them, creating a design that reflects modern aesthetic patterns. The colours retain the natural feel of earthenware, embodying simplicity and natural beauty, while still preserving a strong cultural identity.

Q5: What is your view on the application of traditional culture in modern art design?

A5: I believe traditional culture is an important source of inspiration for modern art design, but it must be reinterpreted in an innovative way. The elements of traditional culture should not merely be replicated; instead, they should be reinterpreted according to contemporary aesthetic trends and functional needs. This way, we can both preserve culture and breathe new life into it. Through my designs, I hope to help more people understand and appreciate Yi culture while showcasing the minimalist beauty of modern design.

Q6: Do you have any recommendations for works by designers with a similar background?

A6: You should take a look at the works of the Erguo Design Team. They are from Liangshan and focus mainly on furniture design. They have a deep emotional connection to Yi culture and a unique understanding of it. Their designs not only emphasise the practicality of the products but also delve into the ethnic symbols and beliefs behind Yi culture. By integrating traditional and modern design concepts, they present Yi cultural elements in a way that feels more accessible and vibrant in modern life. I think their works both preserve the core values of traditional culture and inject modern artistic vitality into it, further promoting the inheritance and dissemination of Yi culture. I can also recommend a graduate design project from one of our students, which focuses on applying Yi lacquerware elements to packaging design.

B.3.2 Interview Transcript – Fashion Design Artist (Ms. Su Xiaoyan, Designer)

Date: 2nd August 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The Application of Yi Ethnic Lacquerware in Modern Art Design

Q1: As a designer with extensive research experience in Yi ethnic clothing, how do you integrate other Yi artistic elements, such as Yi lacquerware, into modern Yi clothing design?

A1: I have always focused on incorporating the artistic characteristics of Yi clothing into modern design, primarily by drawing inspiration from Yi decorative patterns and colours. Yi clothing and lacquerware share many similarities in their decoration and colour usage, a

similarity that stems from their shared cultural background and artistic elements. In modern design, I combine, deconstruct, and reorganise these elements, creating a shared design pattern between Yi clothing and lacquerware. This approach not only continues the traditional culture but also plays a crucial role in both cultural inheritance and innovation. I have two very representative designs here; you can take a look at the images first.

Q2: In the design of this short jacket, how have you innovated using traditional Yi lacquerware patterns?

A2: The main decorative pattern of this short jacket is based on the traditional “cow-eye” pattern, which has been deformed and restructured. We rearranged and combined traditional Yi lacquerware patterns to suit the design needs of modern clothing. In terms of colours, I used traditional lacquerware reds and yellows as the primary hues, adding blue as a connecting and spacing colour, with small touches of rose and white. Black is used for the outlines of the decorative patterns. This colour combination retains the essence of traditional culture while also reflecting the simplicity of modern design.

Q3: What are the unique features of your design in terms of colour and patterns?

A3: The colour scheme of my design uses traditional Yi lacquerware reds and yellows as the main colours, but with a modern deconstruction and simplification, ensuring the design reflects traditional culture while also presenting a unique modern aesthetic. For example, in the design of this long vest, I simplified and exaggerated the proportions of traditional scroll patterns. I used a single blue and white wool base fabric, creating a strong contrast that not only generates a visual impact but also highlights the decorative and independent nature of the patterns. This treatment of colours and patterns meets modern fashion aesthetics while respecting and innovating traditional elements.

Q4: In clothing design, how do you balance comfort and cultural inheritance?

A4: Clothing design, being an art form directly related to the human body, must consider not only visual appeal but also the comfort of the wearer. My designs focus on both aesthetic beauty and functionality, as well as cultural inheritance. Fashion design has become a unique form of expression for traditional culture. Through thoughtful design, I not only showcase rich cultural meanings in clothing but also meet contemporary demands for fashion and individuality. This approach makes clothing more socially valuable and human-centric, embodying the uniqueness of design.

Q5: What role do you think fashion design plays in the inheritance of traditional culture?

A5: Fashion design plays an incredibly important role in the inheritance of traditional culture. It reflects modern aesthetics and cleverly integrates traditional cultural and artistic elements into daily life. Through fashion design, traditional culture is given new life in contemporary society, while also fulfilling modern needs for individuality, fashion, and functionality. Therefore, fashion design is not only an artistic expression but also holds social and cultural value.

B.3.3 Interview Transcript – Product Designer, Lacquerware Artist, Lecturer at Sichuan Normal University (Ms. Chen Yu, Designer)

Date: 5th August 2022

Location: Online (WeChat)

Interview Method: Online Interview

Interviewer: Researcher

Interview Content: The Application of Yi Ethnic Lacquerware in Modern Art Design

Q1: How do you combine the artistic characteristics of traditional Yi lacquerware with modern design elements in your modern Yi tableware designs?

A1: In my designs, I pay special attention to the artistic characteristics of traditional Yi lacquerware, such as its unique shapes, decorations, and colour usage, while integrating modern product design elements. By combining and systematising modern design forms, I enhance the shapes, colours, composition, and decoration of lacquerware, forming a unified design language. This approach not only showcases aesthetic diversity but also strengthens the artistic value of modern lacquerware tableware. In this way, we preserve the cultural essence of Yi lacquerware while ensuring its inheritance and development in modern society.

Q2: How did you incorporate Yi cultural elements in your "Ming" series of tableware designs?

A2: The design inspiration for the "Ming" series of tableware comes from the Yi people's worship of the sun, moon, and stars. I simplified these elements and incorporated them into the shapes of the tableware, using circular and crescent shapes, combined with the form of Western-style tableware. For decoration, I used concentric circle patterns, inspired by the sun, moon, and star motifs. This design both retains the cultural essence of traditional Yi

elements and presents a modern, minimalist design. In terms of colour, the main tone of the tableware is white, a modern colour often used in tableware, while the decorative patterns use the traditional Yi lacquerware yellow, symbolising harvest, the sun, moon, and stars. Surrounding this is a wider blue glowing pattern, with a red glowing pattern in the inner circle. This colour combination creates a strong complementary relationship, giving the overall design an elegant, dignified style.

Q3: How do you integrate traditional Yi lacquerware colours with the functional needs of modern tableware in your designs?

A3: In my designs, I preserved traditional Yi lacquerware colours while focusing on the functionality of modern tableware. For example, in one design, I combined the functional needs of Western-style tableware by choosing a square shape with curved corners, making the tableware more user-friendly. For decoration, I kept traditional Yi lacquerware patterns such as pumpkin seeds and ram's horn motifs, while using Yi lacquerware's signature red, yellow, and black colours. By alternating between inner and outer patterns, I created a warm and lively atmosphere. This design not only meets the functional needs of tableware but also preserves the aesthetic of traditional culture.

Q4: You mentioned the significant versatility in colour usage; how do you expand the colour range of modern lacquerware tableware using colours from different crafts?

A4: In the design of my this case, I deliberately did not fully adhere to the traditional Yi lacquerware colours. Instead, I used colours from other crafts to expand the colour range of modern lacquerware tableware. For instance, I combined the blue of Qing Dynasty porcelain with traditional Yi lacquerware decorative patterns to create a monochromatic tableware design. While the colour has changed, the symbolic meaning and essence of the decorative patterns remain. This design is a fusion of two ethnic cultures' artistic features,

and it better aligns with modern aesthetic demands, showing the diversity of modern lacquerware tableware in cultural inheritance and innovation.

Q5: How do you view the role of modern lacquerware tableware in cultural inheritance?

A5: Modern lacquerware tableware is not just a functional product; it acts as a bridge in cultural inheritance. By merging traditional Yi lacquerware elements with modern design, modern lacquerware tableware can convey the essence of Yi culture to contemporary people. At the same time, modern design language and forms breathe new life into these traditional elements, ensuring that culture is not only inherited but also adapted to contemporary demands for aesthetics, individuality, and functionality. Therefore, modern lacquerware tableware holds both artistic value and social and cultural significance.