

Liu Zongyue's Folk Art Thought-----Reading "What is Folk Art"

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Keywords: Liu zongyue, Folk art, What is folk art

Abstract: As the originator of folk art, Liu Zongyue spent his whole life researching folk art and sought true folk art beauty from people's lives. Liu Zongyue successfully rectified the name of folk art and had a profound impact on the world, this article analyzes Liu Zongyue's views on folk art to take a look at today's Chinese folk art.

1. Introduction

Liu Zongyue has a wealthy family and excellent grades since he was a child, and he started to study Western culture. After that, he was impressed by the Li Chao porcelain of North Korea by chance during his work and began to study folk art continuously. As the founder of the term Folk Art, Liu Zongyue not only initiated the Japanese Folk Art Movement, but also founded the Japan Folk Art Museum and Folk Art Association, which made Japanese Folk Art from being neglected to arouse great attention, thus being called "Father of Japanese Folk Arts" and "Cultural Meritor" in Japan. His thoughts were deeply influenced by the East and West philosophers Hegel and Confucius. This has also become a favorable booster for the formation of his folk art aesthetics, and Liu Zongyue has not only become a Japanese folk art theorist and aesthetician, his rich folk art aesthetics has also had a huge impact on the world.

2. What is Folk Art

The translator of "What is Folk Art" is Xu Yiyi, a professor in the Department of History of Nanjing University. He has translated and annotated a lot of related terms that Chinese people don't know much about, so that Chinese readers can understand the book more deeply. The purpose of the translator's translation of this book is also because the west wind spreads eastward in China, the Chinese have also lost many good traditions. Nowadays, under the background that the country advocates the protection of cultural heritage and revitalizes traditional crafts, how should Chinese folk art develop? The translator also hopes that by understanding Liu Zongyue's thoughts, he can promote the development of traditional Chinese culture.

This book mainly discusses the author's views on folk art, when no one pays much attention to folk art, only Liu Zongyue discovered the beauty of folk art, Liu Zongyue spent his entire life defending folk art and wanted to solve the neglected problem of folk art. He also called on everyone to pay attention to folk art, and at the same time tell people what folk art is, why it should be

developed, what value is folk art, what kind of people can make folk art, and how beautiful folk art is.

3. The Nature of Folk Art

In the book *What Is Folk Art*, Liu Zongyue pointed out that Folk Art is: “The handicrafts used in the daily life of the people are the meaning of folk art. Therefore, folk art is the field of utensils that has the most profound relationship with people's lives among practical handicrafts[1].” Folk arts have practicality, utility, mediocrity, healthy, simplicity, cooperation and nationality. Practicality refers to the combination of “use” and “beauty”. Utensils can show beauty only in the process of use; Utility refer to mass-produced and cheap ones; Mediocrity means not to think that extremely abnormal items are beautiful, and to emphasize returning to the basics; Healthy refers to the fact that folk art is out of use, so it is also shrinking and pathological; Simplicity means simple, not luxurious, and not deliberately decorated; Cooperation means that folk art is completed by many people; Nationality character refers to a country, and the nature of the country can also be seen in folk art.

Folk art is produced in large quantities, can be seen everywhere, can be bought cheaply, and available everywhere. Such items have nothing to do with the lives of the rich and aristocrats, but have a close relationship with the lives of the people; Liu Zongyue defines folk art as practical items with typical meanings. Liu Zongyue compares the “people's craftsmanship” and “the nobleman's craftsmanship” to let us recognize the differences between them and better understand folk art. The main difference is that the “people's crafts” are produced by the folk, used by the folk, most of the authors are unknown, without inscriptions, produced in large quantities, low prices, natural, simple, relaxed in production, unintentional, and natural materials. The “noble craftsmanship” is basically the opposite. It is produced by nobles, used by nobles, the author is a master craftsman, is engraved with inscriptions, is produced in a small quantity, is expensive, is used to show off, has many decorations, is made with great care, and the materials are precious.

It can be seen that the small but precious “noble craftsmanship” will naturally be favored by many people. So why is Liu Zongyue obsessed with a large number of cheap folk art? In Liu Zongyue's view, beauty belongs to the people, not to a small group of people. Therefore, the natural beauty that belongs to the folk art of the people is certainly better than the flashy beauty of a few noble craftsmanship.

4. The Beauty of Folk Arts

Liu Zongyue believes that folk art is beautiful because he believes that ordinary artifacts can also produce beauty. Just as there are so many flowers that look beautiful, if there are only a few kinds of flowers, the earth will become a wilderness. Only the beauty of countless wild flowers can have natural beauty. Just like folk art, folk art presents a robust and lively beauty of life. Although folk art is ordinary, it is great, mature and simple in beauty. Liu Zongyue believes that soundness is only the combination of “beauty” and “use”. If folk crafts leave “use”, they lose their true beauty. If you forget “use” to pursue beauty, it is “art” instead of the name “craft”. Folk art only has the deepest beauty if “use” and “beauty” are integrated.

And why Liu Zongyue said that cheap folk art is also beautiful, because folk art serves the majority of the people. Although in today's society, cheap has the contemptuous meaning, and is often referred to as cheap things, thought to be crude. However, in the past, folk utensils were indeed a combination of “many”, “cheap” and “beauty”. Folk art is more important than rare, expensive, and individual items, deeper and more beautiful, and should be regarded as a typical object of the country of beauty, and should be valued by everyone and the country.

“Many” things are also “beautiful”. It is because of many that it is loved and used by everyone. However, people in the world admire rare things as precious, so many folk arts are naturally ignored. Can't there be too many things to create beauty? Is it rough, inferior, and ugly? Less things are loved by the world because they are less, and if there are more and more beautiful things, shouldn't they be more admired by the world? The combination of “many”, “incorruption” and “beauty” is the beauty displayed by folk art.

5. Folk Art Museum

In order to show the world the beautiful objects, Liu Zongyue established Japan's first folk art museum to collect all kinds of beautiful folk art in the world with the goal of beauty.

How to judge the beauty of a folk art product also relies on intuitive feelings, but folk art museums and art galleries are completely different. Although the Folk Art Museum is an exhibition hall where objects from intuitive beauty are placed. But the facts have also proved that the items displayed in the Folk Art Museum are more than 90% different from those displayed in the art museum. Most of the exhibits in the Folk Art Museum are objects with no inscriptions, and the authors are also unknown craftsmen. It is different from art museums, which display paintings of famous people.

Liu Zongyue also pointed out that beautiful display methods are very important to exhibits. How to display, how to display, when to display, how to use lights, etc., all play an important role in whether the folk art can correctly convey its beauty to the world. At the beginning of the establishment of the Folk Art Museum aims at the joy of beautiful objects that everyone can appreciate, find the goal of beauty, and gain something.

6. Chinese Folk Art

Liu Zongyue is great and respectable. He has promoted Japanese folk art to the world. Today, the rich and well-preserved craftsmanship in Japan cannot be separated from Liu Zongyue's contribution to folk art. But what I feel even more is Liu Zongyue's shouting to the times. Just like Morris and Ruskin, in this flashy society, he can still have a pair of bright eyes to insight into the problems of society and spend his entire life proving to the world that it firmly believes that folk art will one day be respected and praised by the world.

In his “Generality to Folk Art”, Pan Lusheng, a Chinese research scholar of folk art, pointed out that Japan's understanding and research on the concept of folk art is smaller than that of Chinese folk art research. Compared with the scope of Chinese studies, Japan's is only one aspect, not all. Of course, the focus of research on folk art in Europe, America and other countries is different from that of China and Japan.

Therefore, Chinese folk art should take a path of its own, neither copying Japanese folk art nor worshipping Western folk art in the country. How should Chinese folk art be? Mr. Zhang Daoyi, the father of Chinese folk art, also put forward his own argument on folk art, including subsequent researchers, who are constantly enriching and perfecting folk art ideas. However, how to properly promote and protect folk art, and let folk art advance with the times, is a question that each of us needs to think about.

Despite the heavy responsibilities and a long way to go, the beauty of folk art seems to be a recognized fact. Folk art is the embodiment of the uniqueness and richness of a country, which is beyond doubt. By studying Liu Zongyue's thoughts on folk art, it is more conducive to Chinese scholars to study folk art in depth, and plays an important guiding significance for the development of traditional Chinese handicrafts. By learning Liu Zongyue's spirit of folk art, it is also helpful for us to learn from him. Learning from his life-long dedication spirit, constantly rooting in the

grassroots, and constantly enriching his own theory and practice, this also plays an important guiding role in our search and excavation of folk art today, and it also plays an important role in the Chinese people's adherence to cultural self-confidence.

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