

The Characteristics of the Riddle for Dong People

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Keywords: The riddle for Dong people; types; characteristics

Abstracts: The riddle for Dong people could be presented as a typical character for literary composition in rhyme in Dong people's folk literature, which is also the expression and representation for their wisdom with the observation for the world day by day. This paper will take an elaboration in terms of the types and the characteristics of the riddle for Dong people.

The riddle for Dong people is a representation for their oral literature with wit and interest. On the basis of inheriting the Chinese excellent traditional culture, the riddle for Dong people had developed and inherited since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949; Especially in 1978, the open-up policy promotes the living-standard for people, the riddle for Dong people with a sense of prosperity, meaningful and full of times that came into being.

1. The types of the riddle for Dong people

Riddles developed into two types in the process. One is Domestic Riddle which is mainly composed of riddles of objects and riddles of descriptive words. The other is Lantern Riddle, meaning riddles of the broader type, which is also the general term of all forms of riddles^[1]. Dong people, as a member of the Chinese nation, their riddle inherited the outline for the Chinese traditional culture. It could be classified in two types, thus riddle for words and riddle for object. The riddle for object, which was called *donv yangh xonh* in Dong language, *duan-yang-xuan* in Chinese. The riddle for words which was called *donv siih* in Dong language, *duan-sui* in Chinese.

1.1 The riddle for object

The riddle for object comes from their daily life, most of them tend to be things and objects that can be seen. Such as animal, plants, tool for work, articles, organ and the natural phenomena etc. The riddle for objects usually adopts the use, characteristic and function, by ways of personification, analogy imagination, instruction, enlightenment, understanding, ligature, allusion and sophistic words to help people judge, speculate and associate.

1.2 The riddle for words

Riddles of Character, a major type of riddles, are short and metaphoric descriptions of things or situations, usually seen in the form of questions^[2]. The riddle makers often present riddles

according to the pronunciation, glyph and meaning of words, which can help Dong people, especially for the young generation by training their ways of thinking in Chinese learning, in order to learn from other nations, take progress and share the prosperity for Chinese culture. In generalized conception, the riddle for words including all riddle about words, like word, words and sentence etc. In narrow sense, the riddle for words refers to riddle for word, which based on its stroke, paragon by ways of on-off, addition and subtraction, imagination and understanding.

In terms of the riddle for Dong people, it refers to narrow sense based on its stroke, paragon by ways of on-off, addition and subtraction, imagination and understanding to present the word vividly. Take the word tea as a example, it can divided into three part, thus the upper, middle and lower part. It express as “*xia zhang shu, shang zhang cao, ren zai zhong jian ha ha xiao*” in Chinese. Such kinds of riddle is meaningful for the literacy in children, practice their ways of thinking as well.

2. The characteristics of the riddle for Dong people

2.1 Expression with Numerous Technique

The medium of riddle refers to the style of language usage and ways of expression in sentence, especially in the representation of the riddle.

The riddles for Dong people are from their daily lives, which use metaphorical, anthropomorphic, reprise, exaggerated rhetoric methods to express the riddles exactly and vividly. As well as the Dong Ge, the Dong riddles are rough initially. With time flow by, it tends to be generous in sentence and rhythm. Some riddles could be express in two kinds of rhetoric methods or even. Some of them use metaphorical methods to express the objects characteristic, some of them use exaggerated rhetoric methods to emphasize the riddle itself, which are popular and interesting, thus unique in the expression ways of arts.

Such as the sifter, a tool for labor work in rural area, convey that

*Zhu lan zha lan yi hang ying, yi zhao bei kun luan fen fen;
xiao bing dan shou chuan qiang guo, jiang ju fei pang tao bu ying.*

Some use anthropomorphic methods to express writing brush,

Sheng lai zhu ding dang shu tong, yu shu wei ban le wu qiong, tuo diao mao zi gan huo lu, xi su dai mao cai xia gong.

2.2 Dexterity in Languages

Being interesting is the key of popularity and circulation for Domestic Riddles^[3]. The riddles for Dong people, in language usage, is with iconicity, unique in the expression ways from the perspective of arts.

Before the People’s Republic of China instituted characters for Dong people in 1958, they have no characters, and all the riddles mainly communicated in oral way. Dong language has 28 initial consonants (Chinese has 21 initial consonants), 52 compound vowels (Chinese has 24 compound vowels) and 9 tones (Chinese has 4 tones). The abundance in initial consonants , compound vowels and tones makes Dong language meaningful and colorful, the riddles for Dong people as well.

In the riddles for Dong people, there are numerous words that wit similar meaning or tones could be consist as sentence and paragraph that mentioned below,

*Bie ren hua hong wo hua huang
Bie ren sheng mao wo sheng chuang
Bie ren ming hao wo ming ku
Bie ren pa gan wo pa qiang*
(the answer for this riddle is balsam pear)

Some riddles seems simple but interesting with rhythm sensation just like tongue twister take the example below,

Yuan kan zi **pu pu**
Jin kan yuan **hu hu**
Shou qia shui **lin lin**
Ru kou tian zi zi

(the answer for this riddle is grape)

Some riddles presented by ask and answer interchangeably, take the example below,

Ni cai shen me dai zhi mao?
Ni cai shen me quan shen ci?
Ni cai shen me kao shu dou?
Ni cai shen me zhan shu yao?
Wo shuo shi zi dai zhi mao
Wo shuo ban li quan shen ci
Wo shuo qie zi shu dou kao
Wo shuo yu mi zhan shu yao

2.3 Remarkable National Characteristics

In terms of the description and ways of interpretation, the riddles for Dong people are with obvious ethnic characteristic.

2.3.1 The irreplaceable Dong language

Riddles for Dong people contain plenty special terms, such as the so-called *duo-ye*, *duo-ga* and *la-han* in their daily life. Take the two paragraph in Dong language and Chinese below as examples,

Eis dos yees eis dos al
Nyaemv nyaem meec nyenc bail jongl kap
Bu duo-ye bu duo-ga
Wan wan you ren wu ling ting
Mei ren duo-ye mei ge sheng
Ren men mei wan tie er ting
(the answer for this riddle is pillow)
Yac jagx lagx hank laot yangh pangp
Maenl maenl wenh maoc laos yav wangp
Liang ge la han yi yang gao
Tian tian wang huang tian yun fei liao
(the answer for this riddle is chopsticks)

Such as:

Unv eip wap jeml jids singc nyih
Lenc eip wap nyaenc jids juh xangp
Xian kai jin hua jie qing yi
Hou kai yin hua jie yin yuan
(the answer for this riddle is cotton)

The “singc nyih”(qing yi)and “juh xangp”(yin yuan)here, the former is the special term for Dong people, the latter translated in Chinese. *Qing yi* in Chinese refers to the sentiment between people is well and deep, also means kindness while in Dong language, it means unrequited love, which is different from that of Chinese. *Yin yuan* in Chinese refers to the relationship for lovers among young men.

The riddle for cotton take description for the growing process of cotton vividly. This style of metaphorical way in telling the sentimental development between lovers appropriately, especially in Dong language, it is simple and meaningful.

2.3.2 With strong vitality for Dong people

The riddles for Dong people reflect animals and plants of which Dong people usually make use in hilly terrain. All of the diddles are the closely description for Dong people's daily.

Economics in Dong area has been great improved with the development of science and technology. People could find the area boasts beautiful scenery: the waterwheels, wind and rain bridges in Dong village, the girls wearing beautiful silver, people walking through the bridge, some of whom are extracting oil, sawing timber, spinning and weaving. From this scenery, people could get deep understanding of the self-sustaining economics in Dong area.

Take the drum-tower as example.

Xing si shan shu cen cen song, li zai zhai zhong wei wei gao, li mian

Nv zi chang ye ge, wai bian la han chui zhe lu sheng hao re nao.

Take the elevated kang as another example.

Yan jing da, du pi fei, guang chi he ba bu chi mi

2.3.3 Harmonious national relationship

In Dong Villages also lives Han, Miao, Yao, Shui, Zhuang people. The instruments they use in daily life are same or similar, which reflected their relationship is harmonious.

Such as *yi zhi ma zha shen xiu chang, ren na kuai zi ta chi liang*; Dong Miao Han Shui *yin ta bang, de chi nuo fan mian chi kang*. (The answer for this riddle is **pestle**). Dong Miao Han Zhuang *jia jia you, ge ge dang ba da ge gou*. (The answer for this riddle is chopping block)

The riddles for Dong people contain Chinese traditional culture, famous histories and traditional crafts and tools that were carried on from generation to generation in their daily lives, of which people were proud and inherited.

It inferred that Dong people approve of national culture and have strong identification of Chinese traditional culture. Dong people take efforts to devote to our country, Chinese nation and Chinese culture, which is the fundamental part for national unity and social stability. Their approval, identification and devotion are of great significance in understanding and inheriting Chinese civilization for young generation.

2.4 Delicate in Design

The conception of riddles for Dong people tend to be related with Dong people's daily lives and work, that including pulling up seeds, transplanting, extracting oil, sawing timber, plowing, spinning and weaving were deeply branded. One riddle can present in several perspectives, such as tile, it can be presented from 9 angles or even. Just take two examples that mentioned below,

Shen you ling jiao tong xing ming, xiang chu bu jiu yao li **fen**, tong zuo lao yu shou jian ao, chu de lao long dou wang gao chu qu pan **deng**.

Qian zhi gui wan zhi gui, you de pu fu, you de yang shui, ri shai yu lin.

Wu suo wei.

The former conceives the riddle from its process, characters and how people use to describe; the latter emphasis on the state of the tile, which is lively. Such kind of methods and forms are popular with local people.

3. Conclusion

With the advancement and development of economics nowadays, the riddle for Dong people tend to be abundant in terms of meaning and plentiful in terms of type which inject endless and brand vitality to promote its moving forward. Meanwhile, it could be inherited and innovated as a form to enrich people's spiritual life that maintain the diversity of the Chinese Culture.

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