



RESEARCH ON THE CRAFT AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
NINIGOU IN HUAIYANG AND TOOKATA SIA-KABAN



YANG LI

Graduate School Srinakharinwirot University

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RESEARCH ON THE CRAFT AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
NINIGOU IN HUAIYANG AND TOOKATA SIA-KABAN



A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of DOCTOR OF ARTS
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THE DISSERTATION TITLED
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BY
YANG LI

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(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chatchai Ekpanyaskul, MD.)
Dean of Graduate School

ORAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE

..... Major-advisor Chair
(Assoc. Prof. Dr.Sathit Thimwatbunthong)	(Prof. Dr.Pisit Charoenwong)
..... Co-advisor Committee
(Asst. Prof. Dr.Sitthidham Rohitasuk)	(Asst. Prof. Dr.Denpong Wongsarot)
 Committee
	(Asst. Prof. Dr.Piyanard Ungkawanichakul)

Title	RESEARCH ON THE CRAFT AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NINIGOU IN HUAIYANG AND TOOKATA SIA-KABAN
Author	YANG LI
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Thesis Advisor	Associate Professor Dr. Sathit Thimwatbunthong
Co Advisor	Assistant Professor Dr. Sitthidham Rohitasuk

This research examines the craftsmanship and cultural values inherent in Huaiyang Ninigou, assessing their transformation in the wake of societal shifts, and conducting a comparative analysis with Tookata Sia-Kaban. The investigation is structured around three primary objectives: Firstly, to dissect the development and evolution of Huaiyang Ninigou as a traditional craft amidst social transformations. Secondly, it aims to scrutinize the cultural values embodied by Huaiyang Ninigou within the context of social change and their consequential influence on society. Lastly, the study endeavours to juxtapose the craftsmanship and cultural ethos of Tookata Sia-Kaban against those of Huaiyang Ninigou. The findings from this study illuminate that societal progress has not only enhanced the robustness and vibrancy of Ninigou craftsmanship beyond its original state, but also led to adaptations in its form to better cater to market demands. Furthermore, the study reveals a paradigmatic shift in the cultural significance of Ninigou, transitioning from a realm of sanctity to one of secularism and entertainment. Despite originating from distinct nations, Ninigou and Tookata Sia-Kaban exhibited variations and disparities, especially in shape and colour. Crucially, both Ninigou and Tookata Sia-Kaban epitomize the human aspiration and appreciation for an ideal life.

Keyword : Huaiyang Ninigou, Tookata Sia-Kaban, Craft, Culture, Social change

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The investigation into the interplay between craft and social change has consistently attracted considerable interest. The impetus behind selecting this study's focus emerges from a concern over the livelihood and societal position of traditional artisans. These artisans, often hailing from humble backgrounds of small-scale craftspeople or peasants, possess a blend of agricultural and craftsmanship skills. They rely on their craft for sustenance and are pivotal in preserving social equilibrium. French anthropologist Marcel Mauss articulated, "The intricate fusion of skills, industry, and crafts forms the technological backbone of a society." Here, "skill" pertains to phenomena that are primitive, traditional, small-scale, or notably adept, while "technology" denotes phenomena that are modern, complex, sophisticated, and rooted in knowledge and objectivity (Mauss, 1973).

British evolutionist Thomas Huxley posited that the artefact or finished product of skill represents a natural human inclination, steered by intellect, to create items unattainable in nature's realm (Huxley, 1989). This principle is applicable to all human-made products, ranging from the simplest flint tools to elaborate church edifices and intricate timekeeping devices. Nevertheless, within the current domestic scope, craftsmanship embodies a dual nature, encapsulating both the artefact's material attributes and the underlying skill set.

As a field of study, traditional crafts have long attracted extensive attention from academics, and a large research system has been formed in several fields. However, at present, there is still a great deal of uncertainty in the domestic academic community about the concept and connotation of traditional craft.

In contemporary society, craft plays multiple roles. It is not only a means of aesthetic expression but has also become a tool for social criticism, political protest and cultural exploration. Craftsmanship began in a specific era, in which it possessed a specific historical direction and meaning of existence, as well as its boundaries and

evaluation criteria; it became independent from general life practices, infused humanistic values with virtuosity, and became a spiritual product.

Society, as a reality co-created by human beings, people give objects and behaviours sociality through sharing and rules. In other words, society is a kind of group or community of individuals, established by human beings to meet their needs for survival and development, and it is the basic unit of human life. Society also includes a set of shared values, moral norms and other "rules" that govern how people behave and interact. Of course, society itself is also a product of history, it is not destined to remain unchanged, social change will produce matching "rules" as if the earthly things are always changing, no one thing can be in the same state for a long time.

Through the above discussion, it is not difficult to get that craft, as a way of expressing and conveying emotions, thoughts and opinions, has always been closely related to social development and change. In other words, crafts are an important part of history and culture, which reflect the ideologies, values and aesthetics of societies in different periods. Crafts are not only affected by social changes but can likewise reflect the development and evolution of society through craft products.

In essence, the real purpose of craft is not only to imitate nature or display external forms but more importantly to convey the spirit and emotion within the artist. Through abstract and symbolic forms, crafts attempt to trigger the viewer's inner feelings and evoke their emotional resonance.

Similarly, one of the artefacts that is a masterpiece of abstraction and symbolism, Huaiyang Ninigou, is a general term for a group of antique clay figurines in Huaiyan(Wang, 1989). Ninigou, as clay toys sold at the annual temple fair at the Taihao Mausoleum, have a history of more than 6,000 years and occupy an important position in traditional Chinese culture(Deng, 2020). As the origin of Huaiyang, located in the southeast of Henan Province, the ancient name "Wanqiu", also known as "Chen" or "Chenzhou", this place from the Neolithic era is China's East Barbarians tribal group activity is an important area, is an important mascot of the Chinese nation and culture, is also the Chinese history of the legendary Fu Xi clan built the capital. Since the Neolithic

period, this place has been an important area for the activities of the Eastern Yi tribal group in China, and it is the important birthplace of the Chinese nation and culture, as well as the place where Fuxi's capital was built in the legend of Chinese history. The Ninigou born here cover a variety of flying birds and animals, with ancient and magical shapes; their main colour is black, supplemented by white, yellow, green and red, with strong visual effects, and they are one of the few clay sculptures in China and even the world that uses black as the base colour, which contains rich humanistic connotations, and their simple and natural beauty is even more valuable after the baptism of time(Yuan, 2009).

Only those who are truly fascinated by the local craftsmanship will devote their strength and effort to making the scene we see today(Thimwatbunthong, 2011). In the process of making and developing Huaiyang Ninigou, we can see the far-reaching impact of social change on them. With the advancement of modernization and urbanization, traditional crafts have been gradually impacted. As a traditional craft, Huaiyang Ninigou is undergoing a difficult transformation and challenge in the context of social change. However, it is regrettable that people have little understanding of the profound culture carried by Huaiyang Ninigou, and current research focuses more on the image of Huaiyang Ninigou, while few researchers have made a detailed analysis of the relationship between Huaiyang Ninigou and social change.

In short, social changes have influenced the image, production method, social status, function, usage scenario, and inheritance of the Huaiyang Ninigou. In addition, as a craft of traditional culture, the Huaiyang Ninigou carry and reflect the traces of social change to a certain extent. Therefore, this paper takes Huaiyang Ninigou as an example to study the relationship between craft and social change from different angles in chronological order, we can better understand the interactive process between craft and society, and reveal the role and significance of craft in social development.

1.2 Importance of Research

The current research on this topic focuses on the following points: firstly, to compare and contrast Ninigou and Tookata Sia-Kaban from the aspect of craft;

secondly, to analyze the differences and similarities in culture and ideology from the perspective of the meanings and beliefs they carry; and lastly, to explore the inheritance and development of craft in the new era through the perspective of globalization.

The primary motivation for this study stems from the author's keen interest in traditional craft. More importantly, as a visual symbol of ancient culture, craft conveys to us the mysterious and ancient wisdom of the ancient ancestors, and it has a unique cultural meaning in the long history of human civilization, which is of high research value. The choice of this study is not only to contribute to the inheritance and protection of the Huaiyang Ninigou but also to put forward one's ideas for the future development of craft.

Specifically, the Ninigou, which is the case study of this paper, is an important member of the construction of traditional Chinese folk culture. The unique shape and mysterious decoration are the mapping of Chinese culture, and it is a valuable treasure for us to know and understand the traditional culture, its unique shape and decoration play an important role in the study of Chinese culture, and at the same time, it also has an important role in the study of "Folklore", "Ethnology" and other disciplines.

It is obvious that craft, as a form of cultural expression, is not only influenced by social factors but also has a far-reaching impact on society. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study the interrelationship between craft and social change using Huaiyang Ninigou as a case study. In other words, this study not only helps to deepen the understanding and protection of Huaiyang Ninigou but also provides lessons and inspiration for the development of other crafts amid social change.

It cannot be ignored that, as international students, it is very meaningful to conduct a comparative study between local crafts and traditional crafts in the place of study, and such a comparison can increase the understanding of the traditional culture and customs of the country of study, which is beneficial to the cross-regional dissemination and development of culture.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To analyze how the Huaiyang Ninigou, as a traditional craft, has developed and evolved in response to social change.
2. To analyze the cultural value carried by the Ninigou in social change and their impact on society.
3. Compare and contrast similarities and differences between Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How have the craft values of Huaiyang Ninigou changed in different social periods in terms of their forms, themes and styles?
2. What are the cultural values carried by Huaiyang Ninigou during social change, and how do they reflect the values, beliefs and culture of the society at that time?
3. Compare Tookata Sia-Kaban with Huaiyang Ninigou, and identify the differences in their craft and cultural value.

1.5 Research Scope Definition

1. Morphology and style: To study the changes in the morphology, style and shape of Huaiyang Ninigou, including the evolution of appearance, structure and colour.
2. Themes: To explore the changes in the themes depicted in Huaiyang Ninigou in different social periods and how they reflect changes in social concepts, values, beliefs and culture.
3. Production techniques: To study the changes in the production techniques and craftsmanship of Huaiyang Ninigou in light of social changes, including the evolution of material selection, kneading techniques, and decorations.
4. Cultural values: Explore the cultural values carried by Ninigou, such as their functions and significance in daily life and folklore celebrations.

5. Inheritance and Protection: To focus on the inheritance and protection of the Huaiyang Ninigou tradition, to study the impact of social changes on the inheritance of Huaiyang Ninigou, and to explore effective ways to protect the traditional craft.

1.6 Expected Results

1. To obtain a detailed description of the historical development and evolution of the Tookata Sia-Kaban in Thailand and Huaiyang Ninigou, and to reveal the changes in the art form and the significance of the art form in different periods.

2. To deepen the understanding of the status and role of craft in society, and to enhance their importance and popularity in the culture.

3. To give advice and suggestions on the protection, inheritance and innovation of craft, and to promote their inheritance and development in contemporary society.

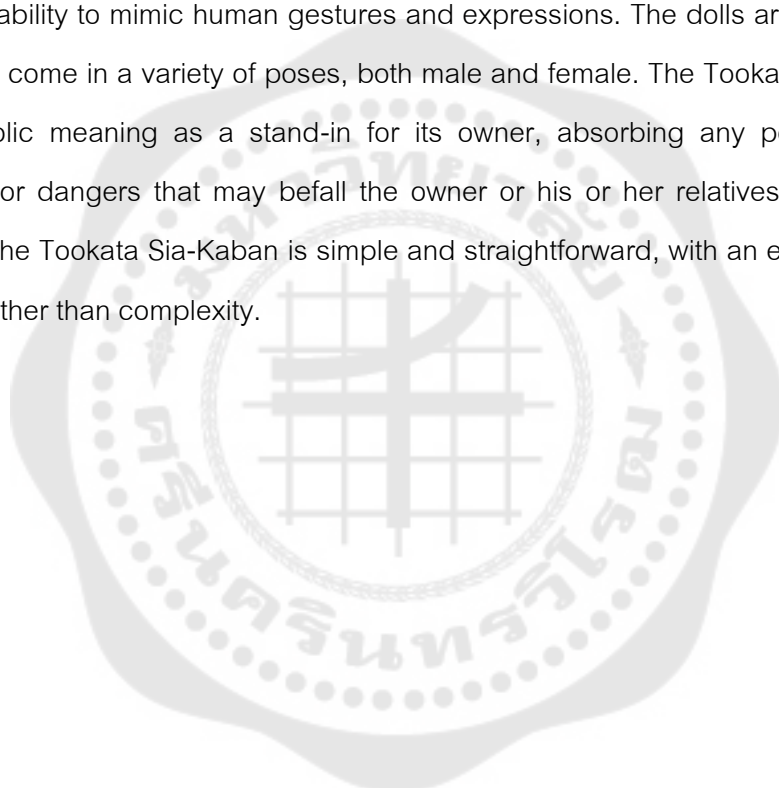
1.7 Definition of Terms

1. Craft: In this paper, craft refers to cultural forms such as handcraft-type processed items in material form and intangible craft processing techniques, crafts and beliefs. Specifically, it is a form of arts and crafts with a unique artistic style produced by manual labour, which is a special form different from mass production in a mechanized manner in large industries. The materials for the finished product are obtained from nature and can be made in unlimited quantities. They are often practical, beautiful, artistic and innovative, and can convey the cultural connotation of a certain period, as well as functionality and tradition, and have some folk beliefs or social symbolism.

2. Social Change: Social change in this paper refers to continuous or significant changes in social structure, customs, values, lifestyles and behavioral patterns over time. These changes may involve a wide range of fields such as economics, politics, culture, science and technology, and have a broad and far-reaching impact on society. The process of social change is highly contingent, and sudden, and with a variety of environments, behaviors, and events bursting forth can have a very different nature in different historical scenarios.

3. Huaiyang Ninigou: This refers to a traditionally handcrafted clay sculpture made in the Huaiyang district of Zhoukou City, Henan Province, China, usually made of clay and later painted, with overall bright colours and bold lines. It is also a form of traditional craft, with a variety of creative themes and unique styles, and plays an important role in aesthetics and folklore.

4. Tookata Sia-Kaban, Thai ตุ๊กตาเสียกบาล. It is a traditional statue made of clay whose origins can be traced back to the Sukhothai era. These unique dolls are known for their ability to mimic human gestures and expressions. The dolls are mainly made of clay and come in a variety of poses, both male and female. The Tookata Sia-Kaban has a symbolic meaning as a stand-in for its owner, absorbing any potential illnesses, injuries, or dangers that may befall the owner or his or her relatives. The process of making the Tookata Sia-Kaban is simple and straightforward, with an emphasis on ease of use rather than complexity.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the relationship between craft and social change through the example of Huaiyang Ninigou and thoroughly explores the impact of craft on social change, as well as the changes in craft caused by social change.

Academic articles, commentaries, writings and related research theories on the topics of craft and social change and Huaiyang Ninigou are examined in detail as follows.

- 2.1 Craft and Social Change
 - 2.1.1 Craft
 - 2.1.2 Social Change
 - 2.1.3 Relationship between craft and social change
- 2.2 Huaiyang Ninigou
- 2.3 Relationship between Huaiyang Ninigou and Social Change
- 2.4 Research Theory
 - 2.4.1 Sociology
 - 2.4.2 Folkloristics
- 2.5 Tookata Sia-Kaban

2.1 Craft and Social Change

2.1.1 Craft

In the scholarly examination of "craft," it is imperative to first delineate the term as denoting both a process and practice, distinct from its classification within various disciplines. This distinction is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Additionally, acknowledging the heterogeneity in craft practices—encompassing studio, trade, ethnic, amateur, and DIY crafts—is essential for a nuanced analysis. The relationship of craft to design is equally pivotal as its connection to art, necessitating a balanced consideration of both domains.

The advent of digital design and fabrication introduces further complexity, challenging traditional notions of manual craftsmanship and material uniqueness. The discourse surrounding craft, whether viewed as a collection of disciplines or as a practice, has been subject to extensive debate over the past century. The studio craft movement, in particular, has experienced significant contention, with the rise of a 'craft-as-art' perspective since the 1950s questioning foundational aspects of craft such as functionality, skill, and materiality. A critical starting point for this discourse is the distinction between craft as a practice and process, versus its identification as a discipline category. These two conceptual frameworks differ not only in their function but also in their historical trajectories. The term "craft," in its broadest sense, signifies "skill," a connotation that can be traced back to the Middle Ages. Conversely, the categorization of "craft" as a discipline is a more recent development, emerging in the late nineteenth century as a reaction to industrial production methods. An exploration into the genesis of craft as a disciplinary category reveals several key insights that are instrumental in defining the scope and nature of craft within scholarly research (Shiner, 2012).

To reconceptualize "craft" within the ambit of scholarly discourse, it is pivotal to acknowledge its multifaceted nature and relational positioning within the cultural and artistic landscape. Contrary to insular definitions, "craft" emerges as a dynamic category, intricately situated at the nexus of industrial production and fine art. This relational stance underscores its historical and contemporary evolution, marked by its extensional identification through an assemblage of disciplines.

The term "crafts" gained prominence following its adoption by a collective of London architects, artists, and designers in 1888. This group, driven by a desire to bridge the divide between the arts, and expressing discontent with the Royal Academy's neglect of decorative arts, founded the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. This initiative was not merely organizational but also carried a profound ideological stance, advocating for the recognition of decorative designers and craftsmen as artists in their own right (Stansky, 1985).

Institutions dedicated to craft have historically leaned towards categorical definitions, employing lists that encapsulate materials (e.g., clay, fibers, wood, glass, metal), techniques (e.g., throwing, weaving, turning, blowing), or functional products (e.g., pottery, furniture, jewelry, tableware). Such classifications, while practical, tend to obscure the inherent fluidity and diversity of craft practices. Some researchers' characterization of the crafts as a "consortium of genres" devoid of a unifying principle highlights the limitations of these conventional approaches. A more nuanced understanding of "craft" demands a departure from rigid classifications, recognizing the potential for materials and techniques to transcend traditional boundaries and intersect with the realm of canonical art, particularly sculpture. The challenge lies in articulating a definition that accommodates the inherent diversity of craft, acknowledging its role in creating objects that may defy conventional categorization by material, technique, or function (Greenhalgh, 2002).

With an uninterrupted history of more than 10,000 years, Chinese craft is facing the test of metamorphosis and regeneration after three major periods of development and evolution: ancient, modern and contemporary.

Crafts are often the cultural symbols of a particular region or nation and are the embodiment of the region's way of production and life, natural products, folk culture and historical inheritance. It is rooted and grown in a specific regional space and is closely related and inseparable from the daily life of the people in the regional society.

The definition of traditional craft in this paper covers two aspects of the knowledge system, i.e. intangible and tangible, while the protection of intangible knowledge resources is particularly emphasized. Tangible traditional crafts are regarded as products and carriers of skills. To delineate crafts more clearly, this paper breaks down the ordinary type, the special type and the form of dissemination.

Firstly, from the point of view of material forms, craft can be divided into the following two aspects. On the one hand, the form of living goods and commodities, which are mainly characterized by natural materials and handmade; on the other hand,

the form of cultural environment, tools, design motifs, written records, and expressions related to the creation and processing of craft.

Secondly, from the social and cultural point of view, the craft can be understood as handmade skills related to folklore and belief activities, including spiritual concepts, oral traditions, craft secrets, customs, regional culture and other resources.

Finally, understood from a communication perspective, crafts can be divided into the following categories. The first category is secret craft knowledge, which belongs exclusively to a specific traditional group or community and cannot be taught publicly without the holder's permission; the second category is crafts that belong exclusively to a specific traditional group, which have been made public but have a close relationship with a specific traditional group and have an important spiritual significance; and the third category is traditional craft resources that are completely open to the public, where the knowledge of the crafts has been made public, and where the connection to a specific local group has The third category is the fully publicised traditional craft resources, the knowledge of which has been fully disclosed and the connection with specific local groups has developed into a traditional craft resource common to the Chinese nation.

Overall, crafts represent not only the creation and construction of a world of meaning, whose core value aims to promote human freedom; they are also a field of perception and experience, whose core value aims to respect natural living beings. Crafts are known for their respect for the living individual and the potential possibilities of the generative process. The development of craft is a "technical" method that is gradually formed and continuously improved by the people in their life practice due to their personal needs. It is mainly derived from people's actual life experiences, which are abstracted passed down and shared among groups of people as society changes, and repeatedly practised, thus forming the internal impetus for continuous development and evolution. This creates an internal momentum for continuous development and evolution.

Indeed, craft creates a space for us to explore the meaning of human life and the realm of life. As a profound exploration of the essential existence of human beings, it not only provides individuals in the contemporary technological society with an escape and a haven of spiritual peace but more importantly, essentially reveals the potential possibilities and unavoidable value dimensions of the comprehensive and free development of human beings.

To sum up, the craft is not only a production technique originating from the practice of daily life but also represents an important part of a way of life and folk culture. In traditional societies, crafts are closely integrated with all areas of life, with different groups of labourers forming different groups of craftspeople, and crafts play a crucial role in social change. Some traditional crafts are even closely linked to human morality and ethics, becoming an important factor influencing all aspects of an individual's life.

2.1.2 Social Change

Social change is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has been the subject of extensive research in various disciplines. Social change refers to changes in all aspects of the phenomenon of society, the dynamic process of change and its results of all social phenomena, and the sum of all phenomena and processes such as development, progress, stagnation and regression of society. Social change encompasses both social progress and regression, as well as social integration and disintegration(Long, 2011). It is not difficult to see that social change is an inevitable process of human social development, which covers the transformation from traditional society to modern society, as well as the continuous evolution and change within modern society.

Throughout the historical development of society at home and abroad, social change has always followed a basic path: as the wheel of history advances, the elements of the old social structure appear to be incompatible with the national development and construction, the original elements are divided and accompanied by the emergence of new elements, the new elements and the original elements produce

new links between the new social structure to be bred or the original social structure to be developed so that the social structure is integrated and gradually tends to stabilize. The social structure will be integrated and gradually stabilized(Zhang, 2019).

Social change is usually triggered by a variety of factors, including technological progress, economic development, changes in political systems, cultural exchanges, population mobility and environmental changes. These factors interact with each other, causing adjustments and reshaping of various aspects of society, thus shaping the social landscape in different eras.

Importantly, social change has far-reaching implications for both social stability and social development. In the process of social change, several challenges and contradictions may arise, such as changes in social stratification, rising social inequalities, cultural conflicts and clashes of values. At the same time, social change also brings new opportunities and possibilities to promote social progress and innovation.

Social change is studied in depth to understand social trends, problems and solutions. Focus on the impacts of social change, explore how people adapt and respond to change, and explore the adaptability and resilience of social systems and cultures. Overall, social change is an important aspect of social development; it is one of the core topics in the field of sociology and is important for understanding the history and future development of human societies.

Frankly speaking, the study of social change has attracted the attention of sociologists from a very early stage and is an enduring topic in the field of sociology. The study of social change is a complex system, and through the sociological perspective of Western scholars, social change has been studied and explored in depth, in an attempt to gain insights into the inner laws of social development and to gain a deeper understanding of social change.

Based on Popenoe's quadratic approach, this paper describes the classical sociologists' theories of social change and the theoretical development based on them, to prepare for the next research.

2.1.2.1 Socio-cultural Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary theory occupies an important position in sociology, and its advocates include Spencer, Darwin and others, who believe that society is an organism that evolves and that evolution is continuous and in a certain order. Among classical sociologists, evolutionary thought dominated the viewpoint, and it was generally believed that social change followed a linear pattern of development, i.e., along a single pathway. For example, the economy has evolved from food-gathering and pastoral societies to agricultural societies and now to industrial societies; the family has evolved from group marriages to matrilineal societies and then to patrilineal societies. However, it was not until the 20th century that scholars began to realize that social change is multi-linear, from simple to complex in general, and that different societies may have different ways of change. Representatives of the evolutionary school of thought include Comte, Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Tonnies and others.

2.1.2.2 Cycle Theory

Unlike evolutionary scholars who believe that social change is linear and progresses in a particular direction, cyclists believe that human culture and society is an undirected, continuous pattern of change that matures, declines, challenges and responds. In other words, that is, the development of human civilization is a cyclical process of maturation and decline rather than simple evolution, arguing that cultures or civilizations can move forward and may also decline. Its representatives are mainly Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee and Pitirim A. Sorokin.

2.1.2.3 Functionalism

If there is one theorist at the center of contemporary sociology, that theorist used to be Parsons. Parsons is a representative of the functionalist school of thought. Parsons believed that social change was possible, and from the basic elements of a social system, he divided change into two categories: change in the system itself, which arises from outside a particular system, i.e., in other systems; and change between parts within the system, which arises from the tensions and strains within the

system. Similarly, he understands society as an interdependent system in which each part performs a function to maintain its stability, and the equilibrium of the components of the social system constitutes the normal state of human society. The existence of conflict in it is merely an anomaly (Parsons, 1980).

In other words, in social change, the interchange of information and energy between systems of action offers potential possibilities within or between systems of action. One reason for change may be due to a surplus of information or energy in the exchange between action systems, leading to a change in the output of information or energy across and within systems. Another reason is that the supply of energy or information exceeds the demand, thus causing problems of readjustment within and outside the structure of the social system (Turner, 1988).

2.1.2.4 Conflict Theory

The basic idea of conflict theory emphasizes inequality, tension and conflict in society. This theory assumes that social change is not only inevitable but also drastic. Instead of maintaining the existing social integration and equilibrium, social change breaks the existing order. Conflict is seen as the driving force of change, driving the evolution and transformation of society.

To sum up, sociologists from the mid-to-late 19th century to the early-mid 20th century attempted to account for social change in a way that would reveal the inner laws and universal patterns of human social development. These theories are summarized in three features: firstly, they emphasize the inevitability of social change, arguing that the transformation from one social form to another is inevitable and irreversible in the long run; secondly, they emphasize the regularity and universality of the process of social change; and finally, they emphasize the predictability of the process of social change.

Since the mid-to-late 20th century, traditional theories of social change have been challenged. Giddens and Moran argue that these theories provide an oversimplified description and understanding of the process of social change, ignoring the complexity and contingency of the social change process.

Giddens argues that, on the one hand, there is no universally applicable law of human social change, and that social change cannot be described and analyzed in a uniform way using an evolutionary model; on the other hand, it is pointed out that history is not the story of the growth of the world, and that, unlike the evolutionary process of organisms, the life of human societies has a reflexive nature, which undermines any attempts to explain the process of social change in terms of a single, absolute cause and effect mechanism. approach, and similarly, there are no demarcated units of social evolution in the process of social evolution(Giddens, 1988).

Moran offers a sharp critique of all popular determinism in modern science. He points out that the evolution of the entire universe, including human and social change, is full of complexity. The term "complexity" here refers to contingency, disorder, individuality, intricacy, diversity, ambiguity, contradiction, etc. In our understanding of the social and historical process, we first see the "disorder" of history, but then we also discover the determining factors in it and begin to seek the laws in the process of social change. Disorder and order are inseparable, and both the evolution of nature and the evolution of human society are a unity of disorder and order(Moran, 2001).

All in all, the social change theories of classical sociologists have provided us with many points of view that we can draw on. These theories have provided an in-depth discussion of social change from different perspectives, and they are still the basis of our research today. Studies based on these foundations have argued that the process of social change is highly complex and full of contingency, uncertainty and discontinuity, while at the same time, there is also a certain degree of inevitability, certainty and continuity. Admittedly, it is difficult to judge what kind of embodiment its shape and structure will take in the future social change, however, the trend towards the association of individual free will is hard to avoid(Qiu, 2019).

2.1.3 The Relationship between Craft and Social Change

The relationship between the changes that have been taking place in craft production and the development of complex societies is multifaceted and involves

several different processes. Among the factors that cannot be ignored are the development of social stratification, the development of political centralisation and the increase in social heterogeneity. Examples include the changing nature of the production and use of high-class goods, and relatively labour-intensive goods used for special occasions that bring honour and pride to the consumer. Importantly, craft specialisation in China was not a causal factor in the development of political centralisation, but rather changed with the development of social stratification (Underhill, 2002).

Firstly, the development of craft plays a role in promoting social change. According to the American anthropologist Gertz, the craft is a product of elaboration used to interpret social relations, maintain social order, and reinforce social values. In turn, it can be argued that social and cultural changes are bound to affect the flux of crafts in a given environment (Zhu & Wang, 2009). Secondly, crafts can shape social perceptions and ideologies. DeMarrais argue that crafts are deeply rooted in everyday life, and even more so as part of special occasions of ritual, political or biographical importance (DeMarrais, 2013). As one would expect from a phenomenon as varied as it is, crafts, through their production, use and display, help to share a basic understanding of the complexity of society, they create and express values for individuals and groups, act as a protective force for the maintenance of social capital, and, finally, they create places and media for the expression of identities and social relations. In other words, crafts and cultural activities play an active role in improving the culture of society (Song & Kim, 2019). Last but not least, crafts, as a reflection and record of culture, can show social change and inspire social change or action. In other words, even in situations of extreme poverty and oppression, people have shown an amazing capacity to resist (Scott, 1992).

It should not be overlooked that crafts are also subject to social constraints and commercialization. The values, economic environment and power structure of a society may have an impact on the content, form and mode of transmission of art, and

craftspeople may face trade-offs and challenges between their freedom to create and the needs of society.

Admittedly, crafts are seen as a medium for transmitting direct meaning, using specific elements as a medium of communication, and reflecting certain social behaviors or social structures. At the same time, it represents certain dimensions of individual thoughts, needs and feelings in highly typical situations(Nanda, 1987). Specifically, crafts and society are interactive and dialectical game relationships. Amid social change, the craft can be a tool for reform and reflection, as well as a reflection of contradictions and conflicts in social change, and they can also record and pass on history, culture, and traditions, which play an important role in the memory and identity of society.

Therefore, the relationship between crafts and society is not a simple correspondence, but it is also not a relationship that is detached from and unconnected to society(Wang, 2012). Overall, the relationship between crafts and social change is diverse, complex and interactive.

2.2 Huaiyang Ninigou

Huaiyang Ninigou is one of the most characteristic folk artworks in the temple fair of Taihao Mausoleum in Huaiyang District, Zhoukou City, Henan Province, Huaiyang is located in the southeast of Henan Province, which is known as "Wanqiu" in ancient times, also known as "Chen" or "Chenzhou". "It is an important birthplace of the Chinese nation and culture. Taihao Mausoleum is located in Huaiyang city 1.5 kilometers north of the Cai River, The mausoleum has 10,000 acres of Dragon Lake, and Taihao Mausoleum is composed of "the lake embracing the ancient city, the ancient city standing in the water," the scene. Taihao Mausoleum is one of the eighteen famous mausoleums in China because it is the tomb of Chinese "humanities ancestor", so it is called "the first mausoleum in the world", which covers an area of about 875 acres, and it is a grand scale and magnificent ancient palace-style complex, also known as the "first pilgrimage in the world"(Li, 2000).

The origin of the name Huaiyang Ninigou is a matter of opinion and disagreement, while traditional folklore and folk art circles study it as a clay toy; on 30 September 2011, Henan Province also introduced a provincial local industry standard, which attempts to define the Ninigou from an official, scientific point of view: "Using the clay within 8km around the Tai Hao Mausoleum in Huaiyang County as the raw material, using traditional folk handcrafts to pound the clay, pinching, tying holes, drying, and putting on the black base colour, and then using the five basic pigments of red, blue, white, green, and yellow to paint and then cover the surface with the solid-colour material to form the clay products". In other words, the Ninigou is a clay product that is shaped and coloured and the production process is regulated. From the point of view of craftsmanship, the fabrication of Huaiyang Ninigou does not seem to be complicated - selecting soil, beating clay, shaping, colouring, dotting flowers and other steps, and making them by the combination of plastic and painting, but each link and process of production has its special instructions and rules, which are important for folk craftsmen. and rules, with extremely high requirements for the fabrication techniques and artistic attainments of folk craftsme(Gu, 2016).

Ninigou is a unique folk art produced under the primitive totem culture, unique to the Taihao Tomb, and is known as "the first dog in the world"(Sang, 2011). The theme of the Ninigou is very broad, including all kinds of birds and animals. Among the many strange forms are "nine heads", "human-headed dog", "human-faced fish", "monkey-headed swallow", etc., as well as a variety of abstract and deformed forms. There are also a variety of abstract and deformed monstrous composites, about 200 kind(Ni & Duan, 2019).



FIGURE 1 Huaiyang Ninigou

Source: Photographed by the author

For example, the spotted hong, snake, two-headed dog, unicorn, four unimagined, two-headed horse, plucked monkey, peach-hugging monkey, big turtle, doll fish, pigeon, monkey-headed swallow, etc.(Zhou, 2018). The pattern forms of Ninigou are mostly arranged in a repetitive manner using dots, lines and surfaces. It has been examined that these ancient clay toys are living cultural relics of the late primitive society that have been handed down to the present day. The Ninigou reflect the fertility worship of the Fuxi era, and some of them are the remnants of the Huaiyang Fuxi and Nüwa's practice of creating man out of clay(Yang, 1995).

In general, the research on Ninigou began in the 1980s, and with the development of society, research perspectives have become richer and richer. This review analyzes and summarizes them in chronological order.

Domestic research on Ninigou can be traced back to 1983, as the oldest and most prestigious folk artist of Huaiyang Ninigou, Mr Peng Xingxiao began to investigate and collect information about Ninigou. In the following year, Huaiyang Ninigou participated in the "Henan Folk Art Exhibition" held in the National Art Museum of China in Beijing, which caused a sensation and was praised by experts and scholars as a "living fossil" and "native art", "mother art"(Ni, 2019). Ni Baocheng, a famous folk art research expert and president of the Henan Folk Literary Artists Association, was one of the scholars who paid attention to Ninigou earlier, and when he asked Li Xiushen, a famous veteran artist, about the roots of Ninigou, he got the following answer: "It was passed down from the time when the ancestors of the people rolled up the earth and made people." Selected Materials on Speciality Products of Henan Province mentioned for the first time that Ninigou originated from the legend of Fuxi and Nüwa's creation of human beings by rolling the earth - the human-faced monkeys and strange birds and beasts were all made by the Human Ancestor's Grandmaster and the Human Ancestor's Milkmaid(Zhang et al., 1986).

Accordingly, it can be shown that the Ninigou from ancient times to today, is closely related to the legend of Fuxi Nüwa with the yellow earth to create people. Henan

Folk Toys, on the other hand, is the first work to contain a large number of pictures of Ninigou, rather than a research treatise, which leaves us with precious early pictures of Ninigou for our study. Subsequently, Liu Guomei discussed the types of Ninigou and their totem worship, mentioning that local folk artists also believed, based on historical legends, that Ninigou were handed down from the time when Fuxi and Nüwa "made man out of clay(Liu, 1987). Song Zhaolin argues that this is not the case and that it is rather an instrument of sorcery(Song, 1988).

All in all, due to the limitation of time and space, the research on Huaiyang Ninigou at this stage is still in a state of enlightenment and sporadic, and the overall research is not very in-depth, but the ancient characteristics of Ninigou have attracted the attention of researchers.

By the 1990s, the study of Ninigou had entered a new stage of development, and related research had begun to take shape, especially as the number of official works on the subject increased significantly, with the overall study focusing on the legends, themes, types, production methods, and artists of Ninigou. Among them, it is worth noting that the Great River Wind - Henan Folk Art Anthology edited by Ni Baocheng, a great folk art writer, includes several papers on Ninigou, which can be regarded as a milestone in the study of Ninigou, not only providing a large number of pictures of Ninigou but also providing invaluable help for systematic and in-depth research on Ninigou(Ni, 1999).

In conclusion, after ten years of fermentation, Ninigou research has begun to move from fragmentation to systematization, i.e., Ninigou research has tried to begin to show systematization and to argue the rise and fall of the Ninigou from different sides and angles - some starting from the Ninigou's artistic image, some from the Ninigou's colour scheme, and some from the Ninigou's Abstract pattern to start, the continuous growth of researchers to construct the Ninigou "cultural relics" nature and aesthetic qualities, these discussions laid the Ninigou research in the next ten years the direction and tone.

With the advent of the millennium, research on the Huaiyang Ninigou has been growing rapidly, with some scholars focusing on the folk art characteristics of Huaiyang Ninigou(Zhang, 2005). Another group of scholars has focused on the artistic aesthetics and modelling characteristics of Huaiyang Ninigou(Zheng, 2005). Differently, Wang Anxia started from the perspective of packaging design, mentioning that the packaging of folk handicrafts should be designed as a whole by applying systematic thinking, using new concepts, new materials, scientific and reasonable functional structure, highlighting the essence of its culture and spirit, regional characteristics and artistic features in the presentation method, to make it have a strong ethnicity and contemporaneity, and to put on a suitable coat to push it to the market and the world. The market will be pushed towards the world(Wang, 2006). In the same year, different scholars conducted in-depth studies on the historical connotation, modelling, production techniques and creative theme(Zheng, 2009). Xi Yu from the China Academy of Art focuses on the temple fair of Tai Hao, the cultural space where Ninigou lives, and has accumulated a lot of first-hand information for the study of Ninigou due to the use of field surveys and other methods(Xi, 2008).

In general, since the beginning of 2000, the number of studies on Huaiyang Ninigou has increased, and the research angles have also begun to be diversified. Although the depth of research is still insufficient, it has also laid a foundation for further research by later scholars.

During the 10 years from 2011 to 2020, the study of Ninigou patterns is moving towards a more complete and systematic direction, with researchers focusing more on the artistic modelling of the Huaiyang Ninigou, and more closely linked to their respective disciplines of study, as they try to interpret the story behind the Huaiyang Ninigou at a deeper level through what they have learnt. For example, Kuang Fengqin summarizes the visual art elements of Ninigou as colour, shape, and ornamentation through iconographic methods, and analyzes the use of these three elements in the modelling of Ninigou(Kuang, 2011). Yuan Song systematically analyzes the expression of symmetry in the design of the Huaiyang Ninigou pattern and then puts forward bold

design concepts on the composition mode and styling design of the original pattern of the traditional Ninigou pattern, to realize the inheritance, innovation and development of Ninigou pattern(Yuan, 2016).

With the development of society and the progress of science and technology, researchers also explore Ninigou from more perspectives. For example, Liu Yidan attempted to reinterpret the Huaiyang Ninigou culture by designing a means of using information technology, digital technology and art in conjunction with the digital collection and organization of Ninigou cultural resources from the perspective of the protection and development of traditional folk handicrafts(Liu, 2019). Most notably, Jia Huai peng takes Huaiyang Ninigou as the research object focuses on the story form of Ninigou images and their imagery, and analyzes in depth the aesthetic potential of Ninigou on this basis. Through the cross-study of anthropology, archaeology, literature, folklore and other disciplines, the stories and images of Ninigou are discussed in depth, and the aesthetic potential of Ninigou is analysed. Based on the traditional modelling of Ninigou, this study proves that Ninigou is inextricably linked with the Dongyi culture through a large number of materials, deepening the understanding of the connotation of the Dongyi culture and expanding the outer edge of Ninigou(Jia, 2012).

With the development of science and technology as well as the popularization of computers and networks, human beings have rapidly stepped into the information age, and people's lifestyles have changed drastically under the effect of different stages of production methods(Yuan, 2014). Similarly, studies on Ninigou have become richer. Hou Zhen, on the other hand, focuses on deeper issues and concludes that the Huaiyang Ninigou is closely related to festival culture, belief culture, Confucianism and Chu culture(Hou, 2022).

Through dozens of years of research on the Ninigou, we can conclude that academic research on Ninigou mainly focuses on three aspects:

Firstly, exploring the cultural connotations of the Ninigou, including considering them as "sacred objects" for Fuxi and analyzing the legends behind the various shapes and their significance in detail. At the same time, scholars are also committed to tracing

the relationship between Ninigou and ancient civilizations or beliefs, as well as conducting in-depth analyzes of the fertility cult symbolized by Ninigou.

Secondly, scholars regard Ninigou as folk crafts or intangible cultural heritage, focusing on the way they are passed on and the interpretation of their meaning by the artists. Research in this area focuses on the status of Ninigou in folk traditions and the role they play in cultural transmission.

Thirdly, the research focuses on the artistic characteristics of Ninigou and its applications. Scholars endeavour to explore the artistic value of Ninigou and their applications in different fields of art, to promote the dissemination and development of Ninigou culture.

In short, academic research on Ninigou has not only been carried out from the perspectives of cultural connotation, folk crafts and intangible cultural heritage but also explored its unique value and application potential in the field of art.

It is regrettable that the research of Huaiyang Ninigou in foreign countries is in the blank. As a traditional folk toy, Huaiyang Ninigou carries rich cultural connotations and historical significance. It has unique craft production skills and regional characteristics, reflecting the lifestyle, aesthetic concepts, and cultural heritage of people in Huaiyang. However, despite the attention it receives at home, its visibility and research abroad are relatively low.

However, it is unfortunate that there is a gap in the research of Huaiyang Ninigou abroad. This difference between domestic and foreign research may involve several aspects. Firstly, foreign scholars may lack an understanding of the Huaiyang Ninigou, which has not become a widely known cultural element in the international community due to its traditional and regional characteristics. Secondly, due to factors such as language, culture and academic tradition, foreign scholars may be more inclined to study the art and culture of their own country or region and have less understanding of art forms from other places. In addition, foreign scholars may also face difficulties in obtaining information and conducting fieldwork, limiting in-depth research on Huaiyang Ninigou.

It is worth noting that the research gap of Huaiyang Ninigou in foreign countries also means potential research opportunities. For foreign scholars, the Huaiyang Ninigou, as a traditional art form, can not only be used as a case of cross-cultural exchange and comparative research but also expand their understanding of Chinese culture and folk art. At the same time, an in-depth study of the socio-historical background of the Huaiyang Ninigou, their production process, and their status and function in the local community will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese folk culture and artistic heritage.

Therefore, this study aims to encourage foreign scholars to actively participate in the study of Huaiyang Ninigou, to promote international academic exchanges, and to enrich and expand the research field of Huaiyang Ninigou. Through the joint efforts of scholars at home and abroad, the unique traditional art form of Huaiyang Ninigou can be more widely recognized and noticed in the international academic community, and Chinese traditional art can be promoted to show its unique charm and value in the international arena.

It is also worth paying attention to the fact that Ninigou, a kind of local folk-painted sculpture inherited for a long time, have a close connection between their creation and traditional religious rituals and local folk activities, and are a valuable heritage of the a priori stage of human exploration of nature, knowledge of themselves and creation of civilization(Zhang, 2015). Therefore, to have a more three-dimensional and in-depth understanding of Ninigou, we must explore the relationship between Ninigou and social change.

2.3 The Relationship between Huaiyang Ninigou and Social Change

Throughout history, traditional crafts have played a great role in people's social lives, and the cultural system created to match them has continued to this day and has become an important part of traditional Chinese culture. In short, sorting out the history, characteristics, and relationship with social changes of Huaiyang Ninigou can help to better understand the development and evolution of traditional Chinese arts and the

process of social and cultural changes. At the same time, it has a positive effect on the depth of academic research and the protection and inheritance of local culture.

It is undeniable that Huaiyang Ninigou plays a pivotal role in social change. Before accepting the baptism of industrial civilization, China was in the period of agricultural civilization, which is the era of the prevalence of the legend, the legend is that the Ninigou was created by Nüwa, then sparsely populated, she pinched a dog, blowing the breath, the dog will be alive, and what insects and wildlife can be avoided, so that the people will not have so many disasters. At this time, the Ninigou was the protagonist or supporting role in the mythological story, acting as a product of the cultural context of sacrifice. In addition, the material is easy to get for the development of Ninigou to provide favorable factors - the production of Ninigou required yellow clay from the local Huaiyang, due to the geological environment being just right, digging down one meter to get a fine and sticky and easy to shape the yellow rubber clay. This stage of the Ninigou's "human ancestor monkey", "chaos" is the most representative of this artistic image and social change, at this time the Ninigou is not only the personification of the object but also the apotheosis of man, fully reflecting the people of the ancestor of Fuxi's praise and worship of the feelings.

With the strong desire of the ancestors to dominate life and its primitive expression, sacrificial activities became more frequent, and at this time the Ninigou was closely linked to the reproductive worship purposes of ancestor worship and praying for children, and their modelling and decoration were overflowing with a strong sense of reproductive worship. During this period, the Ninigou took on more of a spiritual role, and their functionality began to come to the fore. Representative Ninigou includes the "Mother and Child Monkey" and the "Immediately Monkey", etc., whose female genitalia are similar to those depicted in the rock paintings of the Wolf Mountain area in the Yinshan Mountains of Inner Mongolia, and both of which reflected the primitive people's awareness of female genitalia during that period. the importance and worship of female genitalia by primitive people during that period(Ni & Duan, 2019). Ninigou during this period also had a special feature - a tie-hole at the head and neck, which could make a

loud whistle, and because of this, it was one of the favourite toys for children at temple fairs in the past. In Huaiyang folklore, it is believed that giving a Ninigou to a child is to spread the merits and aura of one's ancestors in all directions. Such a good deed also allows the disperser to eliminate disasters and illnesses, and to have good luck and peace(Zhao, 2009).

As modern civilization replaces agricultural civilization and the commodity economy gradually penetrates all corners of society, the quaint village life is gradually disappearing, and the once warm folk scenes can only remain in the memory of history. For example, the temple fair for children to spread Ninigou, a folk activity full of rich rustic interest and warm human feelings, no longer exists today. Instead, people nowadays hope that all things will go well, lucky stars will shine high, wealth will come in, the dragon and phoenix will be auspicious, longevity will be boundless, peace and happiness, and other more realistic and utilitarian meanings. Ninigou artists also follow the footsteps of the times, integrating Ninigou with social culture, so that Ninigou themes are adjusted to people's wishes(Chen, 2017), with themes such as: immediately sealing the marquis, soaring to great heights, peace, sending children to send blessings, tigers, tigers, and so on. Some types closely follow current events such as the Olympic Games mascot series, the twelve Chinese zodiac series and so on.



FIGURE 2 Different Huaiyang Ninigou

Source: Photographed by the author

It is easy to see that, as part of a social and cultural system, craftsmanship is not entirely individualized knowledge, but is closely linked to society and exists in the interaction between people and their environment. Therefore, the emergence and development of any kind of craft are closely related to its environment. Not only Ninigou but also the emergence and development of Rhegong clay Buddha statues are naturally closely related to this valley rich in laterite and the deep-rooted Tibetan Buddhist cultural environment(Dang, 2021).

Admittedly, as an excellent ancient technique, clay sculpture is dependent on the land and people who gave birth to it, is formed in its specific historical, social and cultural environment, is passed on by the people who live in it, and has an extremely profound significance for the place and the people in it. China Yinjingzhai Dai bamboo weaving has also transformed social changes, due to the Dai people's admiration and attention to the bamboo culture. This national craft has also been passed down until now, however, with the progress of times and the rise of the tourism industry in

Yinjingzhai, cultural consumption has gradually flourished. To adapt to the needs of the modern market, the primitive social function of bamboo weaving has gradually faded, and it has shifted from practical production to spiritual and cultural consumption production(Gao, 2015).

To sum up, Ninigou is constantly changing, new and inherited in the process of social development; the reason why there are constantly people emphasizing inheritance and innovation is that it is the result of social development, and even more so, it is a short process of a certain stage in the phasing of the progress of human civilization. In the same way, any study on Ninigou, no matter if they are treated as commodities, crafts or toys, rituals or sentiments, etc., is a study of the social relations behind them.

At present, there is still insufficient in-depth research on the Huaiyang Ninigou and social change, especially the lack of materials to fully explore its deep theoretical support. What is more serious is that as time passes, some of the inheritors are getting old, and the first-hand information they hold is at risk of being lost, and there is a break in the inheritance of the Ninigou. This traditional folk art is shrinking rapidly, which has an extremely unfavorable impact on the development of Ninigou.

In conclusion, the relationship between Huaiyang Ninigou and social change is complex and profound and needs to be explored from multiple dimensions and perspectives. For example, its role in local identity, cultural heritage preservation and community development, and how it adapts and responds to the challenges of social change in the context of globalization and urbanization. In this process, we can gain a deeper understanding of the intertwined relationship between art and social change, and we can also find new ways and methods to protect and develop local art such as Huaiyang Ninigou.

2.4 Research Theory

An in-depth study of related theories can not only provide rich theoretical resources and theoretical support for this topic, as well as build a theoretical framework but also provide a diversified and comprehensive research perspective for the study,

which can provide a more in-depth and comprehensive study of the topic of craft and social change.

2.4.1 Sociology

Sociology is a discipline with multiple paradigms that uses empirical investigation and critical analysis to study social facts. Sociology emerged gradually in the late 19th century, with Comte and Spencer as enlightened figures in sociology. Comte believed that the fundamental causes of the transition from one stage to another in social history were caused by contradictions in all sectors of the total social reality, including the political aspect, the economic aspect, and the intellectual aspect, with the intellectual being the primary (Aron, 2018). Sociology is concerned with the interaction of individuals and groups of individuals. Using sociology to do interviews is not just about solving individual problems, but about interviewing more similar people and solving the problems of the group.

By applying Parsons' structural functionalism in sociology, this study explores the development of Ninigou as well as the society that sustains the development of Ninigou, and at the same time, by applying sociological functional analysis methods, it provides a new perspective for examining crafts and social change.

In general, sociology believes that any society is an organic and complete system, and sociological studies always consider it a wide range of social and natural factors; similarly, Ninigou is considered an element in the social system, and the function and role it plays in society is analyzed, as well as the Ninigou's place in the social structure and how it contributes to the order and stability of the society.

2.4.2 Folkloristics

Folklore is the study of customs, traditional skills, living cultures, and their modes of thinking, to elucidate the significance of these folklore phenomena in time and space. The term folklore was first coined in 1846 by the British archaeologist W.J. Thomas. Its original meaning was "the knowledge of the people" or "The Lore of Folk". The scope of its study includes stories, proverbs, customs, crafts, festivals and performances.

Folklore is the initial period of any literature, oral literature passed down from generation to generation, and there are some pieces of folklore passed down from generation to generation whose creators we do not know. Folklore is a mirror of any people. It tries to tell us about the history, way of life, customs, environment, thoughts, imagination and emotions of a people (Noor & Rodini, 2023).

In the subject of this study, the Huaiyang Ninigou is not just a traditional handicraft, it is also a cultural and social phenomenon that reflects the customs, beliefs and lifestyles of the Huaiyang region. Overall, a folklore approach can help understand the role and significance of Huaiyang Ninigou in society. For example, it is possible to explore how Ninigou is made and used in Huaiyang, how they are created and passed on through oral tradition and practical activities, and to analyze the good wishes and hopes carried by Ninigou through the similarity rate and contact law in folklore; most importantly, the entertainment, educational, psychological and continuity functions of folklore can lead to a better understanding of the different roles and significance of Ninigou in social change.

2.5 Tookata Sia-Kaban

In 1983, Angkana Hongma documented a significant discovery from excavations within an ancient palace, revealing the historical use of Tookata for ceremonial burning. The ritual was widely practiced by Tai peoples in ancient times (Bamber, 1998). Findings in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya indicated that dolls from the Sukhothai era were made of both terracotta and glazed ceramics, depicting figures of humans and animals such as riders, wrestlers, warriors, and elephants. These figures reflect the Sukhothai era's Thai lifestyle, showcasing the expertise of the time in form organization and the expression of dynamism, marking them as integral components of folk art.

The dolls of the Sukhothai period encompassed representations of both females and children. Female figures, often positioned within boxes before being obscured from view, were depicted without shirts or coverings, some embracing children in various poses, such as babies lying on legs or children standing drinking

milk. Popular among the northern Thai, these female figures were also shown seated holding fans or chewing, while male figures included scenes of a child resting on a father's shoulder, individuals holding chickens, and seated flute players. During the Ayutthaya era, the crafting of such dolls was considered a form of folk art, where Tookata Sia-Kaban was utilized in rituals as substitutes for real individuals—shaped to represent sick persons or women on the verge of childbirth. The ritual involved separating the doll's head to supposedly carry away misfortune, thus healing the patient or ensuring a woman's safe delivery. Additionally, these dolls were used to address Brahmanical figures and animal representations. With the demographic increase and societal evolution during the Ayutthaya period, the production of terracotta dolls transitioned towards serving a larger community through quantity and utility rather than focusing on quality enhancement. This shift aimed to forge a symbolic connection with beliefs predating the Sukhothai era (Suebpongsiri, 2012).

Summarizing the findings from ancient palace excavations, the utilitarian aspects of these terracotta dolls were highlighted. Primarily, they served as Tookata in superstitious rituals, representing the sick with the hope that destroying the Tookata's head would lead to the patient's recovery. Furthermore, they were employed in ceremonies, including Brahmanical dolls and terracotta Tookata, and for assembling chess sets, indicating their versatile use beyond ritualistic contexts into entertainment. This versatility underscores the profound significance and diversity of terracotta dolls within Thai culture, reflecting a rich tapestry of cultural beliefs and practices.

In Thailand, there exists a form of clay sculpture similar to Huaiyang Ninigou, exemplified by Tookata Sia-Kaban. Tookata Sia-Kaban is crafted from clay and has its origins dating back to the Sukhothai period. The material employed is local soil or a mixture thereof with other substances.

During the Sukhothai period, the production of Tookata Sia-Kaban was more prevalent than during the subsequent Ayutthaya period. Typically crafted by hand, artisans would subject these sculptures to high-temperature kiln firing. Throughout this

process, various glaze colours emerged, including green glaze, white glaze, and brown glaze, imparting rich hues to the clay figurines.

Artistically decorated and crafted, the production process of Tookata Sia-Kaban involves techniques such as scoring, carving, and grooving, coupled with the application of black patterns beneath the glaze layer. Specifically, the process comprises steps such as pinching, carving, air-drying, firing, soaking in green glaze, cleaning, and detailing decoration. These steps collectively contribute to the unique ornamental qualities of the sculptures. In later periods, the discovery of pottery and clay dolls revealed a prevalent deep green glaze, with distinct decorative patterns and colours differing noticeably from other eras.

In terms of societal development and heritage, it is noteworthy that the clay sculpture of the Sukhothai period bore a significant influence from Chinese styles, likely attributed to the historical presence of Chinese craftsmen serving as ceramicists or instructors in the Sukhothai region. Over time, this influence seamlessly integrated into the works of local artisans, resulting in pieces with distinctive decorative details. This tradition has endured, and clay sculpture has become synonymous with Sukhothai, finding utility in daily life, including household ornamentation.



FIGURE 3 Tookata Sia-Kaban

Source: Public Organization(2023,Jun 23) . Types of Handicrafts Sia-Kaban Doll

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology

This research will be conducted using qualitative research methodology. The specific methods are as follows.

3.1.1 Literature Analysis Method

The literature analysis method is an economical and effective method of information collection, which mainly refers to the method of forming a scientific understanding of facts through letting, identifying and arranging the literature, and obtaining information related to the topic by systematically analyzing the existing literature related to the topic. The literature analysis method can expand the depth and breadth of the research on craft and social change through multidisciplinary and multi-approaches, carefully classify and summarize, analyze and sort out, discover the strengths and shortcomings of previous research, and lay a solid and reliable theoretical basis for this research.

3.1.2 Field Survey Method

Field survey also known as field investigation or on-site research, is the practice and application of the "direct observation method", but also the subject of the research work before, to obtain the first-hand raw data of the previous steps. The field research method requires the researcher to arrive at the place of investigation and obtain first-hand information by interviewing, filming, reproducing, organising and digesting. During the period of this project, we first went to the National Museum of Bangkok and the Ayutthaya Museum to conduct field research, in fact, by visiting the Ninigou production base Huaiyang District, Zhoukou City, Henan Province, and selecting the most representative Ninigou production villages Jinzhuang and Xuzhuang villages as the investigation point, to experience the folk customs and traditions of the villages at a close distance. The village's folkways and customs, and conducted popular interviews with Ninigou production artists, listening to Ninigou craftsmen tell strange stories about Ninigou.

3.1.3 In-depth Interview Method

At the same time through field investigation and literature, the author communicates and exchanges with elders and traditional folklore artists related to Ninigou. If field observation is to draw inferences through the researcher's personal experience, observation and experience, in-depth interviews include oral history, focus groups, etc., i.e., obtaining information from the mouths of the researched in the form of dialogue and communication. The narratives of the locals contain not only the content of the oral accounts but also the expressions, emotions and values of the oralists, which can exist as texts for the researcher to interpret in depth. The author seeks to clarify the relationship between the development of traditional craft and social change through interviews and to further reflect on the special value of Ninigou to local beliefs, spirituality and culture.

3.1.4 Inductive Summarization Method

The inductive summary method is a research method from individual to general. It draws a general conclusion by collecting many individual instances or sub-arguments and then summarizing their universal characteristics. There are two ways to summarize, one is to cite examples and then summarize, and the other is to propose a conclusion and then give examples to prove it. In this paper, by citing examples and then summing up, we let books, albums, documents and old scanned documents on the Internet related to Huaiyang Ninigou organize, classify and filter the artistic images of Ninigou, and then finally push the laws that are common to individuals to the whole, so that we can conduct deeper research and exploration of the significance of Ninigou.

3.2 Subject Research

To study craft:

Primitive type Tookata Sia-Kaban in Bangkok, Thailand.

Primitive type Ninigou and new type Huaiyang Ninigou District, Zhoukou City, Henan Province, China.

To study social change:

1. How crafts are being passed on in the face of social change

2. What measures have been taken to protect this craft?
 3. How to develop the craft better nowadays
 4. How social values in China have changed as a result of changes in Ninigou
 5. How the number of Ninigou artists has changed (increased/decreased) in response to social changes

6. How the number of shops selling Ninigou has changed with social change

7. The style of each generation of inheritors

8. How tourists perceive Ninigou (aesthetics/price/significance)

9. How the government views the development of Ninigou

10. The local significance of the craft of clay modelling

Principles of sample selection

The samples were the original Tookata Sia-Kaban, the original Huaiyang Ninigou and the modern Ninigou.

The principle is to focus on the Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou that still exist from ancient to modern times for in-depth analysis.

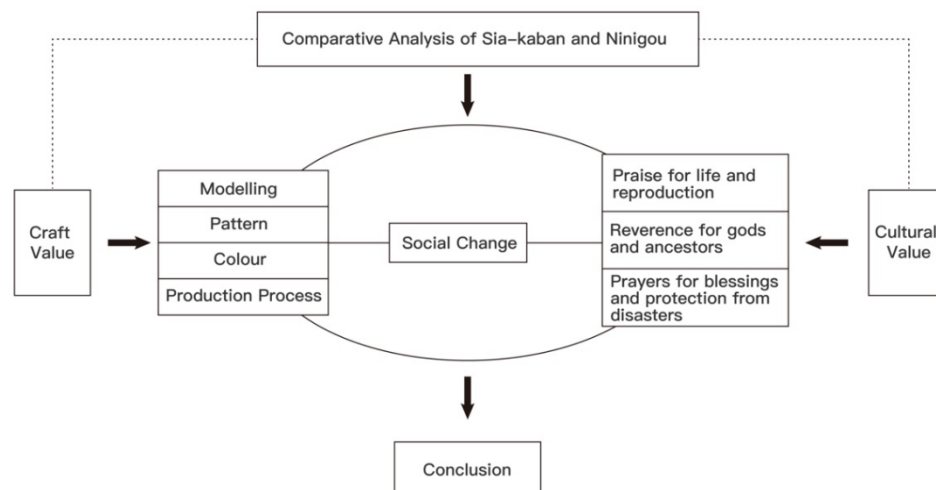


FIGURE 4 Specific research step diagram

Source:Created by the author

3.3 List of Respondents and Reasons for Selection

3.3.1 Specific Interviewees

This respondent was selected to conduct in-depth interviews with artists who have made outstanding contributions to Ninigou with Ninigou vendors, residents, and apprentices. The interviewees came from different age stages, different artistic styles, and different masterships to gain experience and perspectives of working in different time zones and contexts, which will help enrich the diversity and comprehensiveness of the study. Details are as follows (Table 1):

TABLE 1 Interviewee

Name	Age	Sex	Honour	Masterpiece
Ren Guohe	75	Male	President of Ninigou Association	Hominid Monkey
Xu Shuzhang	82	Male	National Inheritor of Intangible Cultural Heritage	Anthropomorphic Monkey
Shao Bo	49	Male	Artists Awarded by UNESCO	The Jade Rabbit
Chen Jing	51	Female	Outstanding of Female Artists	The Horned Beast

3.3.2 Reasons for Selection

Choosing to interview Ninigou artists has multiple meanings and deep analytical value in the study of crafts and social change:

1. Inheritance and innovation: Ninigou artists are the inheritors and innovators of traditional craft, and their inheritance of traditional techniques and innovative practices is the key to the survival and development of Huaiyang Ninigou in modern society. Understanding how they balance the integration of traditional and modern elements, can reveal how Huaiyang Ninigou maintain their uniqueness and attractiveness amidst social changes.

2. Role in change: The role of Ninigou artists in social change is not only that of artists but also that of cultural bearers and community participants. Their social environment and experience will reflect the evolution of Huaiyang Ninigou and the changes in the local society. By gaining a deeper understanding of their social participation and interaction with the community, the connection between Huaiyang Ninigou and the society and culture can be explored.

3. Dialogue between tradition and modernity: The creations of Ninigou artists are dialogue and the intersection of tradition and modernity. Their works may incorporate contemporary themes, techniques and materials while passing on the aesthetics and essence of tradition. By analyzing the creations of Ninigou artists, it is possible to reveal the role played by Huaiyang Ninigou in artistic innovation and inheritance and to explore their impact on contemporary society.

4. Protection and challenges: Ninigou artists understand the challenges and threats facing the traditional craft of Huaiyang Ninigou. By interviewing them, it is possible to understand the difficulties and problems in reality and to provide a basis for formulating strategies to protect and pass on the traditional crafts. Their experience will also help to explore how to balance the traditional craft with the modern economy and market demand to ensure the sustainable development of Huaiyang Ninigou in modern society.

In summary, the experiences, insights and creations of Ninigou artists, as representatives of the traditional art form of Huaiyang Ninigou, provide profound academic insights into the understanding of the role, status and development trend of

Huaiyang Ninigou in social change, as well as important practical references for the preservation and innovation of traditional crafts.

3.4 Research Instruments

In the fieldwork, face-to-face interviews will be used and information will be collected and recorded from the interviewees. In addition, literature search websites such as China Knowledge, Baidu Scholar, and Google Scholar will be used to collect literature.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data were collated and summarized through interviews.

Tookata Sia-Kaban, Thailand, obtained data through interviews with National Museum (Bangkok) staff and Ayutthaya Museum staff.

Huaiyang Ninigou obtained data through interviews with artists who have made outstanding contributions to Ninigou and in-depth interviews with Ninigou vendors, residents, and apprentices.

3.6 Data Analysis

Ensuring that the responses and opinions of each interviewee were accurately recorded, categorized and organized according to the questions in the interview guide - into two broad branches, Craft and Social Change.

Thematic analysis: a thematic analysis was carried out to group similar views and insights into one theme. The aim was to identify core ideas that emerged from the interview data.

Compare and Contrast: compares and contrasts the perspectives of different interviewees. The aim is to identify commonalities and differences between different perspectives to gain insight into the theme of crafts and social change.

Horizontal and longitudinal analyzes: Horizontal and longitudinal data analyzes were conducted. Horizontal analyzes focus on the differences between different

interviewees, and longitudinal analyzes focus on the changes of the same interviewees on different issues.

Presentation of results: the results of the data analysis will be presented, and it is planned to show the important findings of the interview data through textual descriptions, charts, and photographs.



CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Starting from the research objectives, this chapter explores the relationship between Huaiyang Ninigou and social change in terms of the artistic and cultural values of Huaiyang Ninigou. Specifically, the external aspects of the Ninigou are examined through their names, shapes, patterns, colours, craftsmanship, and introduction to the market, and similarly, the intrinsic cultural values of the Ninigou are explored through the dimensions of procreation, ancestry, and totem, as well as prayers and souvenirs.

4.1 Craft Value of Huaiyang Ninigou

Huaiyang district belongs to Zhoukou City, Henan province, located in the southeast of Yu, administrative area of 1334.56 square kilometres, accounting for 0.89% of the total area of Henan province, and Zhoukou 12.1% of the total area. Household population of 1.495 million people, jurisdiction over 17 townships, 2 streets, 1 farm, 1 original seed farm, 1 provincial high-tech zone, a total of 468 administrative villages, arable land of 1.409 million acres, is the main producing areas of wheat, corn, but also the main export base of cauliflower, peanuts, garlic. Located in the center of the Huanghuai Plain, the land is very fertile(Huai, 1991).

Clay sculpture, which uses clay as raw material, is handmade into a variety of images of a folk craft, commonly known as "colourful sculpture", or "clay play" in folklore. Traditional mud sculpture is an ancient and common folk art in China, with monochromatic and coloured figures and animals(Shang, 2012).

As a unique folk craft, Ninigou is worth studying for its grotesque and mysterious totem patterns. The Ninigou of Huaiyang in this research come from Jinzhuang Administrative Village, Chengguan Town, Huaiyang District, Zhoukou City, Henan Province, which is known as the "village of professional Ninigou production". In this part, we will analyze its craft value from three parts: shape, pattern and colour.



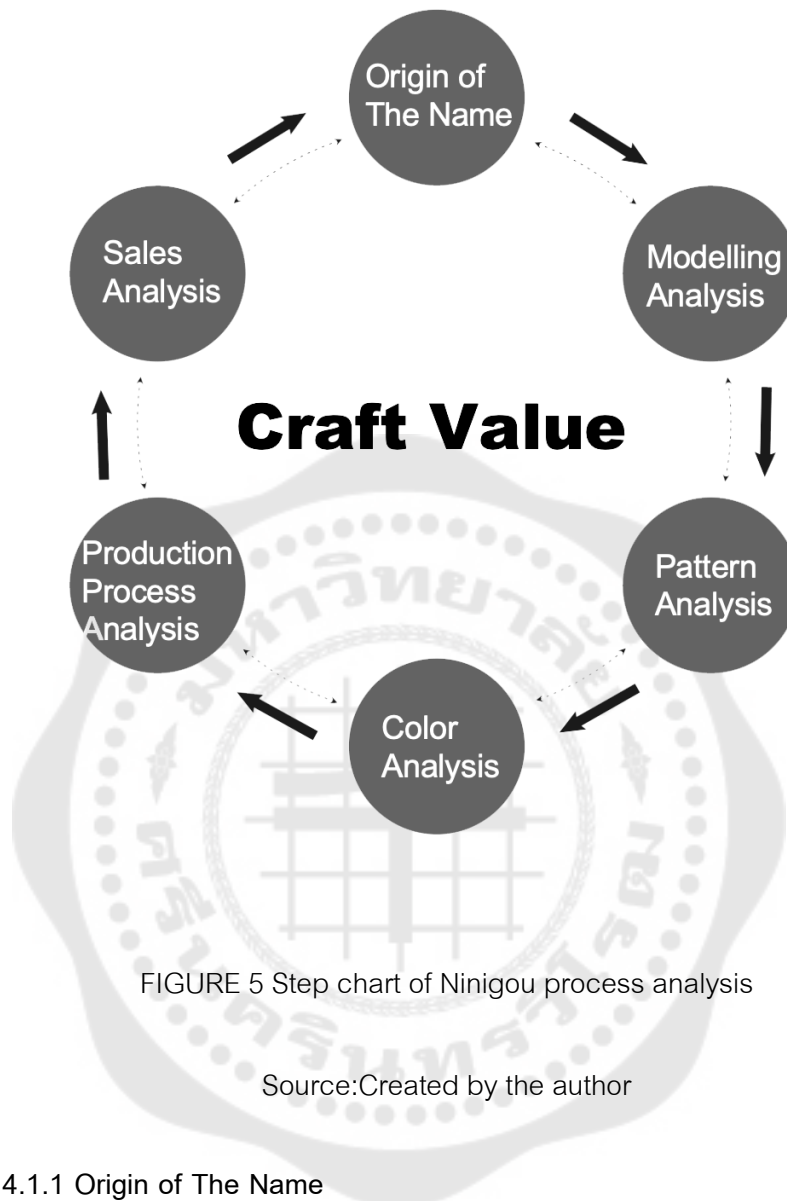


FIGURE 5 Step chart of Ninigou process analysis

Source: Created by the author

4.1.1 Origin of The Name

There are many different opinions about the origin of the name Ninigou. According to the research, the Ninigou now retains a lot of names, such as mausoleum dog, spirit dog, sky dog, god dog and so on. The old artist Xu Shuzhang said that the mausoleum dog is for Fuxi Tai Hao mausoleum guarding the mausoleum of the dog, which is also considered to be in addition to the Ninigou in addition to the most used, most recognized name. Similarly, I found that the original meaning of "Ling dog" here seems to be that the god dog with psychic ability, literally meaning analysis and "god dog" is not different, the name Ling dog is likely another misinterpretation of the mausoleum dog caused by the situation in the early days of the This situation was more

common in the early Chinese vernacular, and it is essentially a misuse of the word due to the similarity in meaning brought about by the same root word in Chinese. Through consulting with the artist Xu Shuzhang, he pointed out that the reason for the use of the two characters "泥" (Ni) is that the first character "泥" is used as a verb meaning "to roll"; the second character "泥" is used as a noun meaning "to roll"; and the second character "泥" is used as a noun meaning "to roll". The first character "泥" is used as a verb, meaning "to roll"; the second character "泥" is used as a noun, meaning "mud" as a mixture of earth and water. Specifically, the two characters "泥" are stacked, with the first character "泥" used as a determiner and as a verb, i.e., to roll and knead with the hands, which also implies intimacy, and the second character "泥" used as a noun, which simply refers to the mud in daily life. The latter word "Ni" is used as a noun to refer to the mud in daily life. The author in the local visited the local people to ask for advice, and asked the name of the Ninigou they all said they only knew Ninigou, and said that has been recited, as to why so called, they were not very clear, but also not on the "Shouling dog", "Spirit of the dog" and so-called and do not know. They also do not know the name Linggou. From the research, the vendors also got a similar answer, most of them said it may be because the mud made it, said the material, so-called Ninigou. The author further asked: Why call it "Nigou" when it would be more concise? They said they were not sure. Anyway, they have been followed by so-called.

With the deepening of the research, I wonder if the word "mud" in "Ninigou" is the use of superimposed characters. In fact, in the era of the Book of Songs, the use of superimposed characters has been widely used and is becoming mature. As the first collection of poems in China, it had a very important influence on the development of Chinese poetry. The use of superimposed characters in Classic Poetry is highly intelligent and sophisticated, which concentrates on its linguistic craftsmanship and aesthetic value, and the number and frequency of its superimposed character usage can be said to be unprecedented(Zhou, 2000). Simply put, this kind of expression, in similar and related analogies, makes use of the imagination of the expresser mobilizes the imagination of the receiver, and often achieves very good results. This kind of

expression is in line with the idea and psychology of "mediocrity" and "harmony" that we have always been adhering to. Compared with other kinds of language materials and expression methods, superimposed characters have many advantages, mainly: popularity, simplicity, obviousness, ethnicity, and colloquialism.

To sum up, the word "Nini" in Ninigou may also be subconsciously influenced by the culture of superimposed characters. The author through the research that Nini stacking is a kind of affectionate call, in the colloquial language is very common, the main expression of favourite meaning, in other words, Ninigou in the author's childhood is also a kind of quite a trendy toy, it seems that this kind of stacking of the name is very in line with the children's physiological and psychological habits, and nowadays this kind of use in the enterprise and the commodity is more than abundant, is to create a sense of proximity and favourite feeling for us.

Then Ninigou the word "Nini" seems to have been answered, and as Ninigou in the last "dog" how to interpret the word, the academic community is more recognized scholars Peng Xingxiao explains Gou means canine, which has the function of classification in the thinking of the forefathers, such as the class and the shape of the character have a canine, and there are canines in the names of many animals, so the Gou represents a general class, which is indeed more convincing logically(Song, 1989).

So far, the origin of the Ninigou name seems to have been dust, but it can be predicted that, with the development of the times, the interpretation of the origin of the Ninigou name will be richer, which is the Ninigou historical status has been the understanding of the Ninigou of future generations are very beneficial.

4.1.2 Modelling Analysis

Speaking of Ninigou, it is necessary to mention its shape, Ninigou shape a variety of types, most of them have old moulds passed down from generation to generation, in other words, this kind of production does not need to have high requirements for the craft of shaping. However, the important thing is that the local artists believe that this kind of moulding is unchangeable and that it is sheltered by the gods. In the middle and late stage of the development of Ninigou, with the increase of

artists and the change of the times, artists began to change their minds and start to innovate the modelling of Ninigou, the theme still lies in reflecting the folklore and changes of the times.

Generally speaking, the modelling of Ninigou carries the social changes and shows three different stages: imitation stage, composite stage, and commodity stage, corresponding to the modelling characteristics of the native type, composite type and modern type.

4.1.2.1 Native Type

As the name suggests, the native type is the portrayal of the original form of nature, such as dogs, cocks, snakes, horses, fish and other animals. Specifically, most of these animals have contributed to the development of animal husbandry in the early days of mankind, and are easy to catch in life and have been passed down with the development of the times. The most obvious feature of this is the addition of some abstract elements while retaining the shape of the original animals, i.e. the original form of the Ninigou can be said to be the early artists' imitation and reverence for all things in heaven and earth.

As E.H. Cornbrich suggests that primitive ethnic art is mostly a human view of the role of images, using primitive tools to inscribe shapes and depict what is seen. In other words, all primitive expressions were determined by the productivity and aesthetic characteristics of the time, which mainly stemmed from two points, the first is the initial tribal folk culture based on the people's need for food for survival and hunting, which is the most simple imitation of reality; the second is the people's careful observation of the natural environment and faithful recording. But due to the limitation of productivity, they could only take the most primitive clay materials imitated and moulded the primitive animals with clay. This land worship started from earth worship in the primitive period and divided into various gods and goddesses, such as the god of the stove and the god of land in the period of agricultural civilization, experiencing the transformation from nature god to personality god(Fan, 2009). The ancestors worshipped the land because people's lives could not be separated from the land, as

the bearer of the traditional agricultural civilization, the land bears the important responsibility of nurturing all things, similarly, the nature worship brought about by the primordial type is due to the domination of human beings by the forces of nature in the early days, and it is precisely because such alien forces have dominated and influenced people's daily lives for a long time that the primordial type of Ninigou still have a place in the complicated type of Ninigou today. Similarly, nature worship is still a very longstanding folk cultural belief phenomenon.



FIGURE 6 Native Type Bird

Source: Photographed by the author



FIGURE 7 Native Type Dog

Source: Photographed by the author

4.1.2.2 Composite Type

Compared with the former, the composite type adds more elements, one type integrates the real existing native type with human modelling to form a new human-animal combination; the other type is a completely fantasised monster and elf, and the image only exists in people's imagination, and it is almost impossible to find a prototype to match it in reality. This type of modelling gives people absurd and grotesque, strong visual impact. According to interviews with local artists, this type of Ninigou is mostly due to the early forefathers in the face of irresistible natural phenomena and imagined

the image of the gods, while their expectations placed in the image of the gods, praying for the gods on their safety and protection of animal husbandry and prosperity. In short, they are mainly ritualistic but also have the symbolism of praying for good luck and warding off evil spirits. Common types of human-faced monkeys, turtledoves, nine-headed swallows and so on. This type is also known as the "interpenetration type".

The composite type is a kind of mostly bulls, goats, tigers, etc. mainly vertical shape, this kind of Ninigou expressed by the shape is usually very exaggerated, at the same time, this kind of composite type does not have a clear name, usually just based on the appearance of the name, such as unicorns, minotaurs and so on. The interpenetrating types are more common and more numerous among Ninigou.



FIGURE 8 Composite Type Many-headed Dog

Source: Photographed by the author





FIGURE 9 Composite Type Many-headed Goat

Source: Photographed by the author



FIGURE 10 Composite Type Monkey & Goat

Source: Photographed by the author

4.1.2.3 Modern Type

With the development, this kind of modelling mainly relies on the craft creation by folk artists according to the characteristic reflection of the times, and its biggest characteristic is to follow the changes in the development of the times. Specifically, the material is taken from life and paired with traditional presentation techniques to express modern themes. Although the techniques are still traditional, they are visually modern. The typical characteristics of this change are personalization, trendiness and entertainment. This makes the original sacredness and functionality of Huaiyang Ninigou disappear, replaced by diversity and modernity, with main themes such as the Chinese Zodiac and the Olympic Games series.

As a new Ninigou artist, Shao Bo said, social changes have made me treasure this craft more, new technology and new media have brought more opportunities for traditional handicrafts to display and communicate, and also brought more creativity and inspiration. Society is developing, human beings are progressing, and the integration of the visual art elements of Ninigou and the aesthetic appreciation habits of modern people is the direction I think about when I create, in my opinion, a good creation not only focuses on the inner subtlety but also pays more attention to the outer form, which is the road to the modern design, and also the road to the development of Ninigou. Nowadays, people want to have auspicious symbols such as prosperity, longevity, peace and happiness, etc., and they are also more utilitarian, which provides a new opportunity for the traditional craft of Ninigou to survive in modern society.



FIGURE 11 Modern Type Bull

Source: Photographed by the author

In short, Ninigou progresses through the imitation stage, the composite stage, and then to the commodity stage of conversion. Modelling evolves from "imitation" to "combination" and finally to "era modelling". In other words, Ninigou's modelling transitions from a single form to a composite, and then from the composite to embody the new wave of popular image modelling trends, namely, reproducing, presenting, and reconstructing.

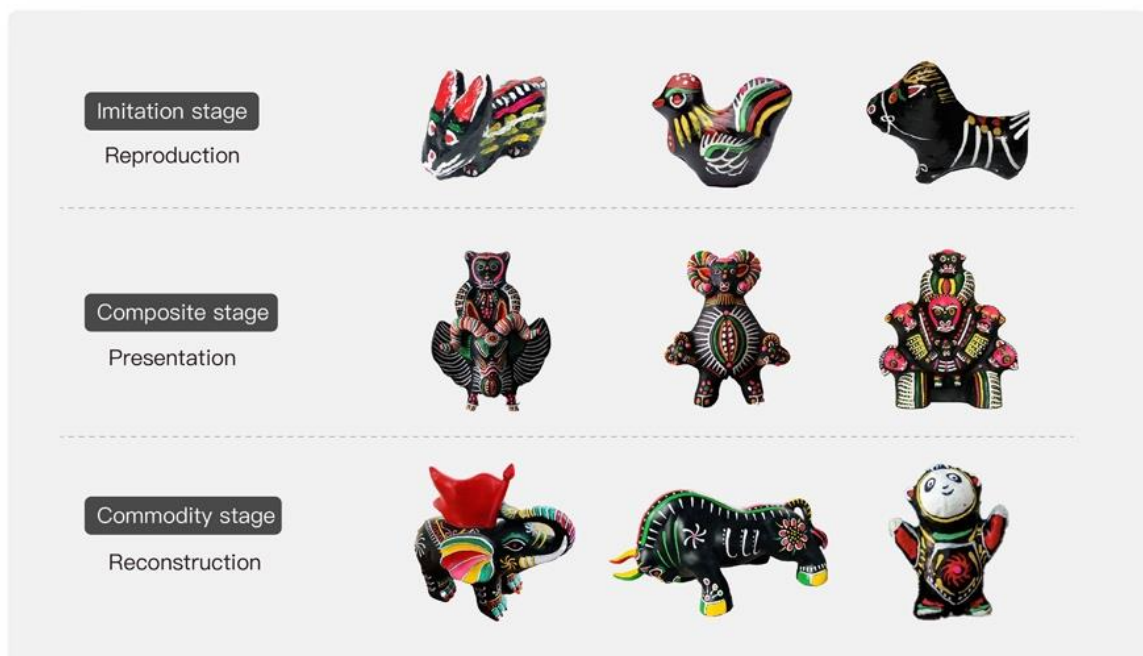


FIGURE 12 Analysis of Modelling in Social Changes

Source: Created by author

4.1.3 Pattern Analysis

The patterns of Huaiyang Ninigou are usually presented in the form of "dots and lines, individually and in combination", which seem random, but with a certain regularity and programmed rhythms. Folklore expert Ni Baocheng classified them into female yin pattern, sun pattern, flower and grass pattern, horseshoe pattern, rope-like pattern, and triangular pattern in Huaiyang Ninigou. Scholar divided them into three categories: the first category, female reproductive symbols and rope-like patterns such as basket patterns and triangular patterns; the second category, sun patterns, etc.; and the third category, Fuxi Bagua patterns (Jin, 1993). Similarly, when asking artists about the significance of the motifs during the author's field interviews, most of the craftspeople mentioned the female fertility symbol motifs and explicitly mentioned that it was associated with fertility worship. This subsection combines the research to sort out the patterns as follows.

4.1.3.1 Female Reproductive Pattern

The shape of this pattern is similar to the female vulva, and it appears in a large number of sphinx monkey-shaped Ninigou's abdomens, which is one of the most common patterns in Ninigou modelling. It is one of the most common patterns in Ninigou modelling. Based on the principle of pictograms, it is named by experts as the "female genitalia pattern". Variations of this pattern include the flower pattern and the horseshoe pattern. The pattern is mainly in the shape of dates and surrounded by multiple layers of arcs, each layer of arcs corresponds to several points, in the outermost arcs have radial arcs straight line, arcs and straight lines were dyed in different colours, modelling symmetrical shapes.



FIGURE 13 Female Genital Partten

Source: Photographed by the author

4.1.3.2 Sun Pattern

This pattern is mainly based on natural phenomena, and its shape resembles a sketch of the sun, with a circle surrounded by radiating lines. This pattern is usually found on the eyes and back of Ninigou. Shao Bo pointed out that in the era of backward productivity, the rise of the sun signifies strength and hope, and in many areas, the sun is honoured as the "sun god", so the pattern in the Ninigou shape is the sun's reverence and praise.



FIGURE 14 Sun Pattern

Source: Photographed by the author

4.1.3.3 Bagua Pattern

This pattern is almost identical to the Bagua created by Fuxi, but it is not so figurative as to be copied in between Fuxi's Bagua. Still, it is created with a combination of dots and lines in the form of the Bagua. The basic structure of this Bagua symbol consists of two parts, yin and yang, reflecting the antagonistic relationship between the two most basic substances in nature - heaven and earth. They are both opposing and unifying, interacting and influencing each other in endless variations (Jin, 1979). Most of this pattern is filled with dots in which the abstract combination of "--" and "-" is used. In the Bagua created by Fuxi, "-" stands for "Yang" and "-" means male," and "-" represents "Yin" means female. Yin and Yang through the way of life, is the ancient laws of the sun and the moon, heaven and earth to observe the exploration of the formation of the icon. Overall, the Bagua symbolizes a new achievement in philosophical thinking by the unwritten ancestors, reflecting their extraordinary ability of logical deduction (Yong, 2005).



FIGURE 15 Bagua Pattern

Source: Photographed by the author

Ren Guohe, an old artist, said on this topic that most of these patterns were left behind by the old generation, and perhaps there is no reason to explain them. However, it is easy to see that this pattern is still a prayer for good luck in life, which is valued by the public.

4.1.3.4 Structural Pattern

This pattern was born in the modern stage and is a product of catering to the current commercial era. The emphasis is on decorativeness, which is usually applied without considering its deep meaning. For example, the fish-shaped Ninigou shown in the picture below has a pattern on its body to fit the structure of its fish and to increase its decorative qualities, not to show other deep meanings.



FIGURE 16 Fish Structure Pattern

Source: Photographed by the author

All in all, the patterns of Ninigou have changed from programmed to random, from figurative to abstract, and from single to multi-dimensional with the changes in society. Modern patterns have more variability and dynamic beauty and are more popular in today's market, but the reproductive pattern, as a traditional pattern, still has a solid position in the market.

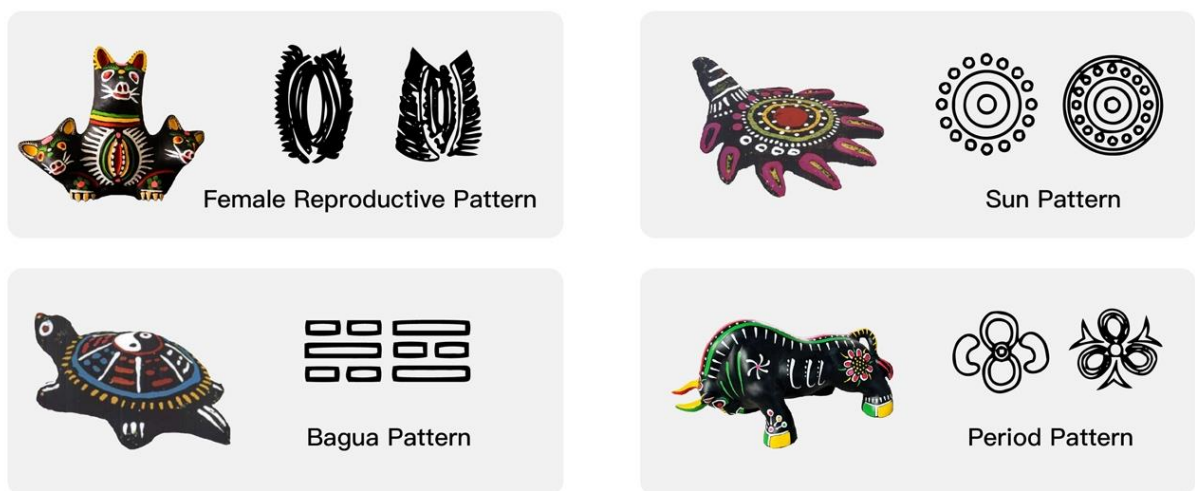


FIGURE 17 Analysis of Patterns in Social Changes

Source: Created by the author

4.1.4 Colour Analysis

Huaiyang Ninigou with black as the base, based on black and then applied to the red, green, white, and yellow four colours, in the black inclusion of the body is a bright and bright, strong contrast, giving people a strong visual impact. These five colours come from the traditional Chinese "five-colour view" and "black" cultural view. "The "five-colour view" originates from the "five elements" of Zhouyi, which refers to the five basic substances of nature: water, fire, wood, gold and earth.

Similarly, Kao Gong Ji records: "Painting and drawing is a mixture of five colours; the east is called green, the south is called red, the west is called white, the north is called black, the sky is called xuan, and the earth is called yellow". This passage depicts the "five-colour view" is China's traditional concept of colour. It is not difficult to see, in the traditional concept of the Chinese people, red, yellow, green, white, black, the five primary colours and the "five elements" of the cosmic structure of the composition of the corresponding mode, and these five primary colours in the traditional concept of production and life with the early people have a close relationship with the stakes, so it is used as a colour of the positive, that is, the "five colours". ", which has the significance of auspiciousness and good fortune. The Shangshu-Hongfan explains it as, One is water, two is fire, three is wood, four is gold, and five is earth(Jin, 1979). In other words, the five-element colour concept in the Chinese nation represents the Chinese concept of the universe and space-time. Its colour combination is the five elements colour combination of cyan in the east, white in the west, red in the south, black in the north and yellow in the centre. Spring, summer, autumn and winter run through the seasons, and the cycle begins again and again, which is the Chinese concept of time.

The symbolic image is mentioned that the crafts of early civilizations were religious symbols, icons, and manifestations of fear and desire(Gombrich, 1995). The colours chosen for the Ninigou undoubtedly correspond to the seasonal patterns of wheat seedlings in the agricultural era, and such exaggerated and bright colours are in line with the characteristics of folk crafts, which make the simple Ninigou show their unique charm, and still permeate every aspect of people's lives today.

Research selling Ninigou businessmen stressed that bright colours can stimulate the human visual senses, bright to attract people, attracting people can be sold. Ninigou artist Xu Shuzhang said that in the early folk creation of aesthetics was less than the practical function, the choice of these colours is because these colours are common and can be obtained in large quantities, the colour will not be too much to pursue the so-called collocation skills. In the early days of society, we used plants and minerals as raw materials for colouring. For example, black in potting ash, yellow in

cattail, and green in wheat seedlings. Similarly, craftsmen would make pigments according to the seasons of different plants for storage and use. However, due to the constraints of the living environment, these plant-based pigments would naturally clump together due to cold and emitting odour due to dry heat, which has always plagued the craftsmen. In the middle period, craftsmen used to buy powdered mineral pigments and mix them with talcum powder to make them sticky and easy to colour. It was not until the 1980s that acrylics gradually replaced vegetable pigments, making the colours of the later Ninigou more brilliant and less likely to fall off.

Generally speaking, the colour aesthetic characteristics of Huaiyang Ninigou include traditional culture, traditional concepts, social history and other elements, which not only have their uniqueness, but also conform to the traditional folk colouring habits, with specific symbolic connotations and psychological demands, and the prominent feature is that the black colour is the base, which occupies more than half of the colour proportion of the whole clay sculpture. With time, the colour materials of Ninigou have also been updated, and the introduction of acrylic and other painting pigments has made the traditional "five colours" more vivid and long-lasting. It is because of the convenience and richness of the new material the Ninigou artist's creative expression laid the foundation for the current market Ninigou colour appeared in the red system belongs to magenta, rose red and so on, the purpose is to better increase the contrast of colours. Some artists use their rich sense of beauty and colour experience to add blue.

In a nutshell, in the "five-colour view" of Huaiyang Ninigou, there is not only a thick world hidden but also a long and mysterious process of human society seen in the colours, which condenses the wisdom of the forefathers and is the crystallization of the national culture.

4.1.5 Production Process Analysis

In the comprehensive study of Shao Bo's Ninigou studio, Shao Bo explains that the production of Huaiyang Ninigou primarily utilizes traditional techniques passed down orally by seasoned artisans, as well as inherited molds from preceding artists for

direct fabrication. The crafting of Ninigou is methodically segmented into stages such as "soil selection", "clay pounding", "clay kneading", "molding", "repairing", "colour application", and "painting". Specifically, the technique involves four principal steps: "punching", "kneading", "pinching", and "dyeing".

1. Selection of soil: Huaiyang Ninigou used in the raw materials, is the choice of local rural pits 2 ~ 3 feet below the ancient lake water deposition for thousands of years, silt and a layer of "mud" soil, which is characterized by a fine texture, without any impurities, viscosity, flexibility and strong.

Shao Bo said that the love of the old craftsmen for the soil is from the heart and full of the highest respect, because the land nurtured them, and there is a proverb that "If you are willing to plant the land with care, the yellow soil becomes gold". Therefore, they are extremely serious from the beginning of the selection of soil, as the saying goes, a good start is half of success. The easy availability of raw materials and the texture suitable for moulding is one of the reasons why Huaiyang Ninigou were born here. He also said that most of the traditional crafts in the past were made by masters who were skilled in carving, painting and compiling one by one. They possessed a high level of craftsmanship, which was honed after a long period of hard practice. Old craftsmen rely on a pair of dexterous hands, they can support their families and even have a higher income than most people.

2. Whacking mud: In general, it is to put the clarified mud soil into a large iron pot or pond to soak for a few days and then according to the need, and then take out the clarified mud after precipitation, slightly tuan kneaded, with a wooden stick repeatedly whacked, so that the molecular structure of the raw mud group is more soft, soft, plasticity, nowadays, with the advancement of technology, this part can be dealt with the help of machines, and at the same time, to make the Ninigou more toughness under the modern technology, it is often mixed with a little cotton fiber into the mud. At the same time, to make the Ninigou tougher, modern technology often mixes a little cotton fiber into it.

Shao Bo said, usually we dig out the wet clay block from the ground, and then put it on the stone mill, with a big wooden stick to pound over and over again, trying to be even, delicate, and elastic, just like rolling out the noodle block. Then spray water, let it slowly seep in; and then and mud, pounding mud, clay grinding is fine, how much water spray, the softness of the mud, and pounding is just right, are very important. If the clay particles are rough, they cannot be processed; if the clay is too soft, it is easy to shape but easy to deform; if the clay is too hard, it is not easy to pinch; if the number of times of pounding is not enough, the finished product will be easy to dry and crack. What looks simple on the surface is not easy to do, and this part is also a great test of the craftsman's skills.

3. Kneading clay: This step is the last process before creation, the focus is to repeatedly beat the clay after repeated kneading with both hands on the table repeatedly, its state is similar to the dough, after repeated artificial kneading of the clay, called "mature clay", at this time the mature clay has a soft and pliable plastic function, as a qualified clay's main characteristics are No sticky hands, no breakage, smooth surface, easy to apply colour after drying in the sun.

4. Shaping: In crafting a specific type of Ninigou, artisans begin by rolling clay into a ball that approximates the size of the final product, creating a foundational shape or "embryo" from which the detailed figure is sculpted. The initial step involves a rough shaping to outline the basic form, followed by the use of rudimentary sculpting tools, such as a toothpick with one thick end and one pointed end, for refining intricate details of the figure. The culmination of this process is a thorough integration of all elements, ensuring any imperfections are corrected for a seamless finish. A pivotal aspect of this procedure is forming the Ninigou, a critical phase that brings out the dynamic posture and precise contours of the figure. It's important to note that the availability of an inherited mold offers a streamlined option, allowing for the direct placement of clay into the mold for shaping.

5. Repair: The first refers to the use of bamboo sticks to insert two holes in the shaped embryo so that the holes are crossed in the body, there is a hole that can be

blown and blown, but with the development of the current society part of the Ninigou in this function to be discarded. It is worth noting that the holes need to be left to dry for some time after insertion before they can be coloured. The second is a further refinement of the previous step after shaping, making its shape more vivid and three-dimensional.

6. Colouring: The colouring method of Huaiyang Ninigou is different from the colouring method of clay toys in other places. Before dyeing, artists first use a brown brush to brush clean the floating soil and impurities on the dried mud blanks, put the cleaned mud blanks into a large iron pot of black water boiled with black dye beforehand, soak them a little bit, then fish them out with a large iron strainer, and then put them on a straw mat to dry. Allow the base colour to dry and then paint the coloured pattern. Shao Bo especially stressed that the moulded Ninigou should be dried in the shade, that is to say, in a place without direct sunlight, if they are exposed to the sun, they will crack and the whole process will be ruined.



FIGURE 18 Colouring

Source: Photographed by the author

7. Painting: as the saying goes, "Three parts plastic, seven parts colour", this part is the artist with red, green, yellow, and white four colours in the dyed black Ninigou blanks, painted colourful, ancient abstract colourful patterns, so that the simple mud modelling transformation, a new look, showing flesh and blood, romantic and flamboyant craft effects. The Ninigou colouring is the colour used by the raw materials, with the development of the times and constantly changing, as early as before the 1980s, the general artists used folk dyeing cloth with foreign colours, the right amount of glue, to prevent fading. Later on, they switched to using bottled painting pigments sold on the market, the most intuitive feature of which is the bright colours, ease of use and customer preference, but the black base colour is still made by using the folk's boiled black to water.

It is worth noting that in the traditional painting stage with the tools farmers planted sorghum stalks, the sorghum stalks cut were into slopes, according to the different sizes of Ninigou, but also choose different thicknesses of sorghum stalks to the pen, sorghum stalks of the core can absorb the colour, easy to control the colour of the intensity of the "point" out of the different thicknesses of the brush strokes. "Point" flowers should pay attention to the control of the direction of the pen, strength and the number of colours on the pen, too little is drawn lines dry, rough, weak, and too much is not good control of the thickness of the pen, the pen has a rigorous introverted, some stretching and rounded. All out of a calm, full heart, no matter how to draw have a sincere, simple feeling. Shao Bo mentioned that this kind of sorghum pole compared to the current stage of the brush, needs a certain learning cost, for beginners often have a certain degree of difficulty, so later the new beginner apprentices are directly recommended to deal with the brush.

With the development of the times, Shao Bo boldly innovated in the process of practice, while respecting and inheriting the tradition, the introduction of high-temperature pottery firing technology, so that the ceramic sculpture version of the Ninigou is strong and lightweight, stable and solid colour durability; such a method on

the one hand, not only retains the traditional cultural heritage and traditional arts and crafts characteristics of the value of the other hand on the style of the Ninigou and the skills of the colourful sculpture for the creation of the improvement of the Ninigou, so that that is, in line with the aesthetics of the contemporary crowd, more visual impact. On the other hand, it improves the style and colourful skills of Ninigou so that it meets the



aesthetics of contemporary people and has more visual impact.

FIGURE 19 Coloured Painted

Source: Photographed by the author



In short, the Ninigou production process has been adjusted with social changes, in general, to make the Ninigou sales more, so that the Ninigou preserved for a longer period, Ninigou craftsmen made unremitting efforts through unremitting research for the development of the Ninigou.

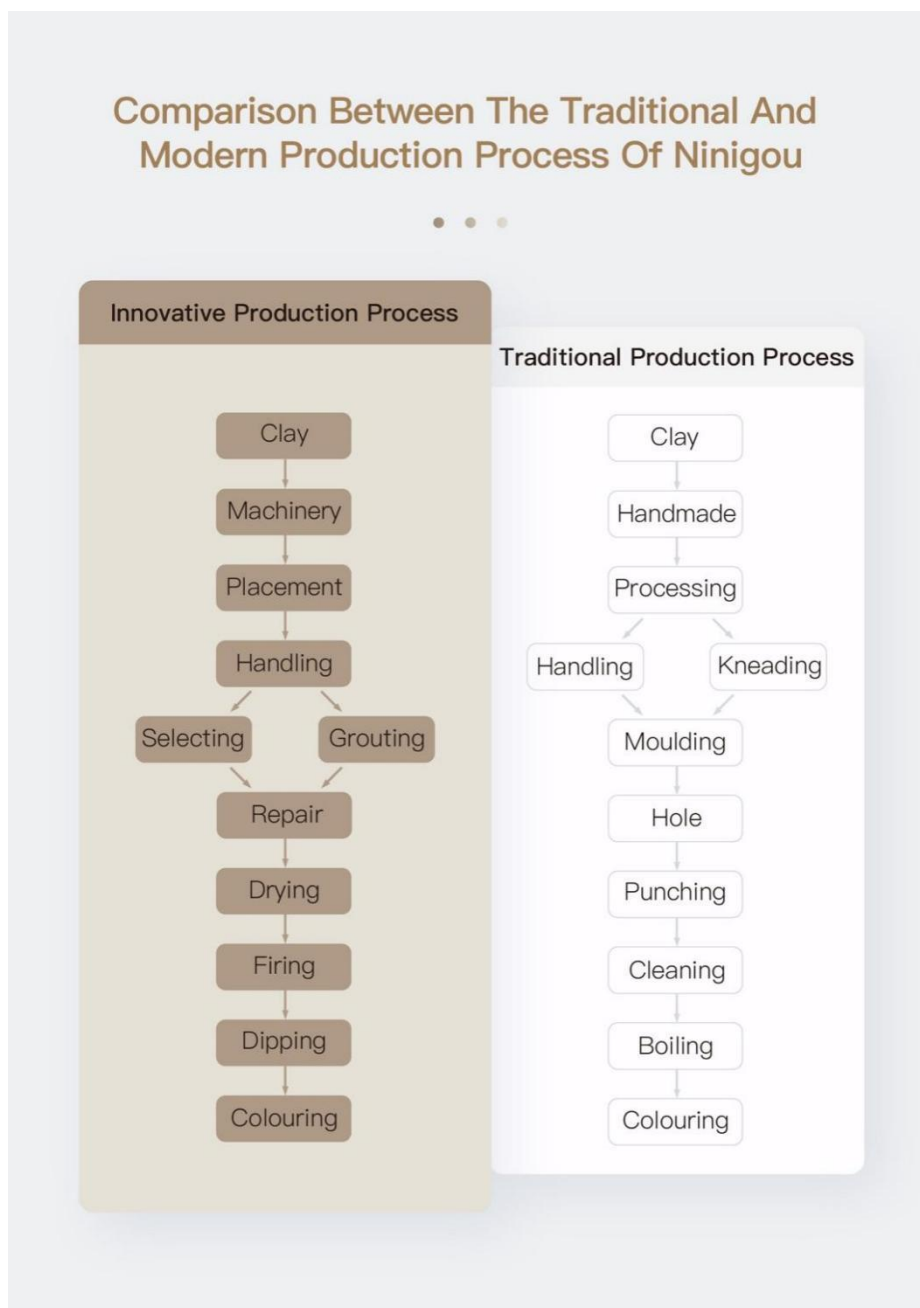


FIGURE 20 Comparison of Production Process

Source: Created by the author

4.1.6 Ninigou Sales Analysis

In its initial phase, Ninigou were traditionally marketed as merchandise during the annual temple fair at the Taihao Fuxi Temple, specifically on the second day of the second lunar month. This period marks the commencement of a month-long festival at the Taihao Mausoleum dedicated to honouring Taihao Fuxi, attracting artisans to present their Ninigou creations for trade. These figurines, sought after for their fundamental purpose of soliciting blessings, become popular purchases among visitors hoping to secure a prosperous and safe year ahead. The original method of Ninigou distribution was characterized by a direct from maker to consumer approach, inherently constrained by the specific time and location of the temple fair. Consequently, the early circulation of Ninigou faced limitations in reach and volume, rendering them a coveted item perceived as being available in a "limited edition" by purchasers.



FIGURE 21 Ninigou in Sales

Source: Photographed by the author



FIGURE 22 Exquisite Ninigou Packaging

Source: Photographed by the author

Indeed, everything is constantly affected by the wheel of history rolling forward, and Huaiyang Ninigou is no exception. Today, in this era of commercial supremacy, capital carnival, the global economy wave after wave, the commodity economy, the law of value seems to dominate everything in people's lives, and people seem to be manipulated by all the "economic fields". With the development of the times, the packaging of Ninigou has also been upgraded, due to the packaging, to a certain extent, to solve the problem of Ninigou is not easy to carry and fragile.

In the increasingly diversified culture of today, Ninigou has been detached from the practical needs of modern life, just for people to watch and in the mud toys. Its existence seems to be only to satisfy people's curiosity and to support people's nostalgia. In the process of history, the cultural value and commercial benefit of Ninigou are the main forces of its inheritance and change. With the commodity economy's rapid development, Ninigou's commercial efficiency is very low. Artist Shao Bo talked about

this topic, the improvement of people's living standards, people also pay more and more attention to the connotation of tourism, hoping that tourism can feel both the natural environment and the humanistic environment. At this time required to Huaiyang Ninigou was a "special medium" to convey the deep meaning behind the Ninigou, through the Ninigou commodity, so that tourists coming to Huaiyang could not only feel the grandeur of the Tai Hao mausoleum but also feel the charm of the culture of Huaiyang Ninigou.

In essence, as a conduit for the dissemination of cultural values, Huaiyang Ninigou has evolved through a series of stages from "imitation" to "composite" and ultimately to "commodity," paralleled by a shift in focus from mere "modelling" to a deeper "appreciation for the expression of the artisan's emotions." This transition from a lack of personal emotional expression to an emphasis on the artisan's emotional articulation imbues each phase of Ninigou creation with profound significance, mirroring societal transformations. Much like how esteemed traditional cultures embody cultural essences passed down through national heritage—preserving the cultural spirit and furthering historical continuity—Huaiyang Ninigou strives to meld diverse cultural expressions and forges innovative avenues for blending traditional culture with contemporary societal norms.

4.2 Cultural Value of Huaiyang Ninigou

Huaiyang Ninigou, often celebrated as vibrant emblems and tangible manifestations of Chinese cultural virtues, trace their lineage back to the venerable myths and sagas at the heart of Chinese civilization, encapsulating the essence and historical sediment of our ancestral culture. These figurines stand out not just as exemplars of China's traditional craftsmanship but also as luminaries within the realm of traditional Chinese folkloric heritage, encapsulating the essence of folk culture. Steeped in the rich folklore of the Central Plains for millennia, the cultural core of Ninigou is imbued with profound significance, weaving together elements of sanctity, folklore, and entertainment. The transmission and evolution of these cultural and historical narratives have, on one front, propelled the preservation of commendable national customs and bolstered the cultural soft power of the nation, while on another front, they have enriched

the collective spirit of the populace. This discourse aims to dissect the cultural significance of Ninigou across three pivotal epochs: the Primitive, Agrarian, and Modern phases of development.

4.2.1 Praise of Life Reproduction

In the life of the Chinese, there is nothing more important than the family. In traditional society, the most important thing in life is to start a family, in other words, the Chinese regard the birth and rearing of children as the most important thing in life, and the most direct embodiment of the Chinese unique sense of life is the worship of the reproduction of life, and the Ninigou directly reflects the greatness and praise of life of the forefathers.

In the primitive stage of development, praying for pregnancy and seeking children was not only a folk activity and the wish of the people but also an organized activity of the state and the expectation of the ruler. Huaiyang Ninigou shows the worship of life and reproduction, and their patterns and shapes are mostly direct representations of reproductive organs and reproductive behaviour. Such as cat-pulling monkeys, two-headed dogs, unicorns, etc.

Shao Bo introduced to the author that the human ancestor monkey and the pack turtle dove are the more unique forms of female reproduction worship in Huaiyang, and the human ancestor monkey is regarded as the symbol of Nüwa, the incarnation of the founder of mankind. There are also many symbols of female reproduction in the decorations on the Ninigou, which are rendered in bright colours. Common motifs include peach-shaped motifs, flower-shaped motifs and triangular motifs. These decorations symbolize the female reproductive organs. Ninigou statue the intuitive portrayal of the female genitalia, not only a strong generalization but also lifelike, between the square inches shows when the artists have extraordinary performance skills.

All in all, in the early reproductive culture, Ninigou paid more attention to the expression of female reproductive characteristics. The patterns drawn on the Ninigou are mostly symbols of female reproductive organs, such as circular patterns, triangular

patterns, peach-shaped patterns, floral patterns, gourd patterns and so on. Most of the Ninigou is in the shape of feeding mother and child images, such as the human ancestor monkey, pack monkey, monkey back monkey, etc. Specifically, the ancestors lived in a world of food and reproduction as the basic requirements for survival, and reproduction is considered to be the root of all divinity. It is reasonable to believe that women who possessed the power of reproduction in primitive society naturally became the object of worship.

The concept is the support of the image, and what kind of concept there is, there will be a corresponding form of expression. Shao Bo points out that Ninigou first appeared in temple festivals honouring the human ancestor Fuxi's pilgrimage to his ancestors for incense. In the years when only the mother was known but not the father, female fertility was worshipped, and it was believed that the woman was the creator of the new life, through intuitive experience, it was seen that the new life came out from the female yin, and so the female yin gained unusual symbolic significance and became a symbol of the creator of the new life.

As society evolved and man's capacity for awareness increased, it became apparent that the role of the male was more crucial in the creation of life. The male is the provider of the seed of life, the sowing of the man's penis is the beginning of life, without the seed, life cannot be conceived, the male phallus of the fertility cult came into being, and the objects associated with the female phallus cult receded into the background. Female fertility is important, and male fertility is equally important, but in the process of life creation, neither female nor male alone can fulfil this great mission of creation, only through the coitus of the two with fertility can the conception and creation of new life be completed.

Structural functionalism believes that one should look through the surface of the phenomenon to capture what is deep in the object(Liu, 2005). It is easy to see through the research that the Ninigou fertility cult overlaps with the development process of human society, and the early female cult attributed to human genealogical memory is based on female fertility and reproduction. In this society, women had the right to fertility

and reproduction and therefore had a higher status. But over time, as societies changed their mode of production, human societies underwent an evolution from hunter-gatherers to agriculture and crafts to industry and modern services. In the meantime, new technologies and modes of production have emerged that have made men more important in production and the transmission of property. It should not be overlooked that in matrilineal societies, societies tend to be more peaceful and consultative because women have more control. However, when political and military crises occur in society, matrilineal societies are unable to provide sufficient stability and military security. As men gradually became military and political leaders, society gradually shifted from a matrilineal to a patrilineal society, and the cult of masculinity was born.

4.2.2 Deities and Ancestor Veneration

Folk beliefs, as an important part of the people's spiritual life world, are an important expression of folk culture. To have faith is to act on it, which is older than any doctrine. "Both historically and psychologically, the rituals of religion precede the doctrines"(Cassirer, 1985). In its natural form of life, folk belief refers to the phenomenon of popular belief in and worship of objects with supernatural power, and its scope involves the transmission of primitive beliefs in folklore, the secularization of man-made religions, widespread secular beliefs, and acts of sorcery, among other things. Huaiyang Ninigou also conform to this belief, which implies the existence of a supernatural power, realized through a constructed system of symbols. In other words, Ninigou not only reflects people's belief concepts but also demonstrates the paradigm of life and the norms of operation in faith-based activities. On the one hand, folk beliefs are similar to the remnants of primitive witchcraft and the theory of "animism", and are closely related to the secular life of the general public; on the other hand, they show similarities with religious phenomena in many aspects.

The first object of the belief in spirits was nature, which is also one of the oldest beliefs. Driven by the concept of spirits, the ancestors believed that the sun, the moon, the sky, the mountains, the rivers, the winds, the rain, the thunder and the lightning all had spirits, and the rumour has it that the agricultural production of

Huaiyang was frequently hit by natural disasters in its history. According to the Records of Huaiyang County, the Yellow River and the Huaihe River were flooded many times, waterlogging repeatedly, droughts still raged, and locusts and hailstones occurred repeatedly. This series of disasters made the people of Huaiyang's demand for food into their blood and bone marrow, and their expectation for a good agricultural harvest even more ardent. Ren Guohe mentioned a legend about Ninigou that brings rain and plough the land. A long time ago, Huaiyang was hit by a severe drought in the spring of a certain year, and there was no rain for several months. The ploughing season was approaching, and if it didn't rain again, the land would be deserted that year. People were at their wits' end and were anxious. One night, a fierce wind rose, dark clouds, thunder rumbled, and heavy rain fell. People were surprised to find the ground covered with Ninigou, they turned on the land, ploughing and cultivating. Soon after, the Ninigou mysteriously disappeared. After dawn, people went out of their homes to check and were surprised to find that the fields had been ploughed and harrowed. People were overjoyed, kneeling in the newly turned land and shouting, "The ancestors sent the Ninigou to give us rain and plant crops." This timely spring rain was deeply imprinted in people's hearts, and from then on, Tai Hao Mausoleum incense flourished, pilgrimage constantly, and the Ninigou was also more loved by the people. Although this story is a bit bizarre, even with the flavour of jokes, the story itself contains many elements worth thinking about and exploring.

In agricultural societies, the foundation of human survival and progress hinges on the success of crop cultivation. There exists a profound bond between humans, the divine, and the soil. This relationship is anchored in humanity's dependence on the earth, with divine blessings seen as vital for bountiful harvests, leading to the deification of such entities. Conversely, diminished reverence occurs if these blessings are not perceived. Thus, the reverence for ancestral deities is deeply intertwined with tangible benefits—specifically, the prosperity of crops. Insufficient or failed harvests pose significant threats to both individuals and communities, making a

successful agricultural yield emblematic of an improved quality of life within these societies.

Having passed through the stage of deity worship, Ninigou is now ushering in ancestor worship. Ancestor worship has a long history in China and is a product of the development of human society and human thinking to a certain stage. With the evolution of history and the transmutation of traditional folk concepts, Ninigou is also under the influence of new folklore - from the worship of nature's divinity to the belief in secular life. The ancestors believed the ancestors to be eternal and indestructible and could provide blessings to their children and grandchildren, and the ancestors became a kind of faith. Specifically, farming societies attached greater importance to blood relations, and both upper-class rulers and folk clans believed that their children and grandchildren owed their blessings to their ancestors, and therefore made sacrifices to their ancestors to express their gratitude and remembrance. Sacrificing ancestors is a virtue of the Chinese nation and a reflection of traditional Chinese culture. Shao Bo pointed out that coming to Taihao Mausoleum in the second month of the lunar calendar to burn incense and pay respect to ancestors is a way to promote this traditional culture. Similarly, ancestor worship in Chinese culture is an important way for family members to express their ethnic identity and maintain community relations. The artist tries to gain strength by connecting the Ninigou in their hands with the sacred ancestors.

4.2.3 Psychological Comfort of Praying for Blessings and Repelling Disasters

During the research, I learnt that in addition to the above cultural characteristics, the Huaiyang Ninigou is also regarded as having the efficacy of curing diseases. According to the legend, when a visitor brings home a Ninigou and throws it into a well, the water in the well is believed to possess spiritual energy. Those who drink the well water will be able to clear their eyes and minds, get rid of all illnesses, and have everything go smoothly. This situation is attributed to the "contact rate" in folklore, which means that when one comes into contact with a certain thing, there will be a long-term sensory relationship between them (Zhong, 2020). Similarly, Shao Bo, a Ninigou artist, said during the author's fieldwork, "There is some basis for this saying that people who

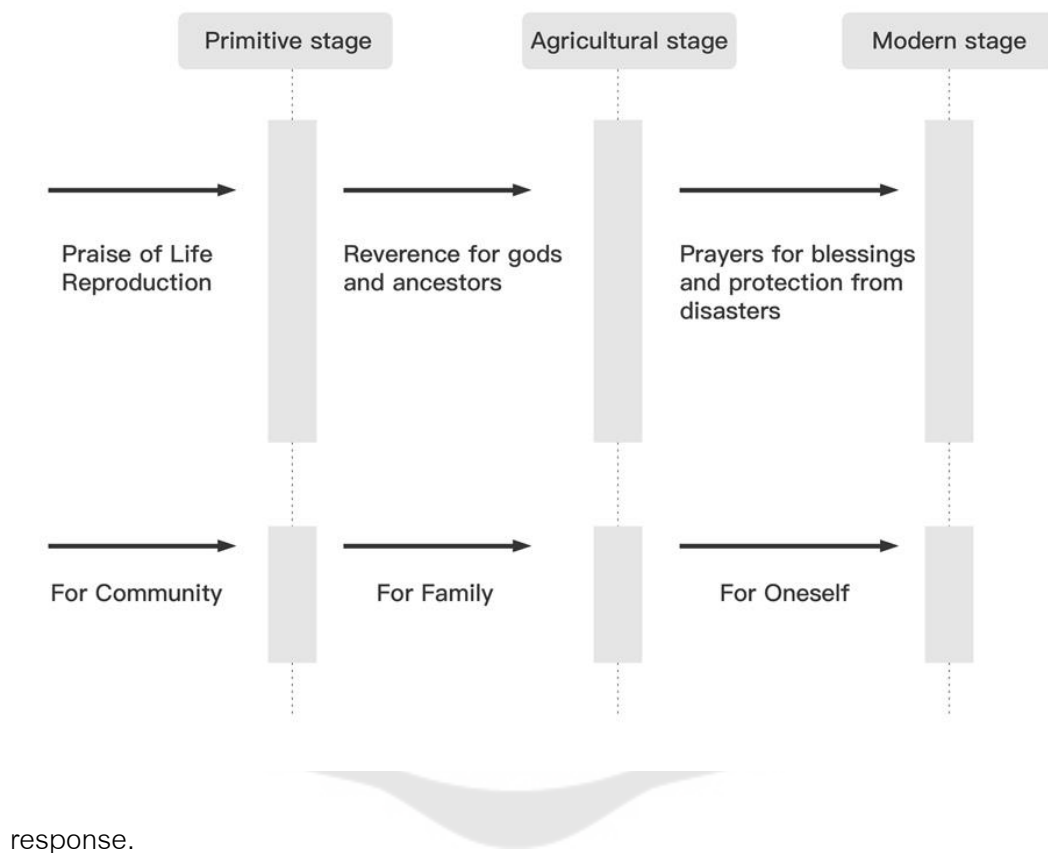
are far away from their hometowns are prone to falling ill due to not adapting to the local environment, and drinking water from their hometowns may help to cure these symptoms." Every year at the February temple fair, you can always see some overseas compatriots in the worship of ancestors after the pious take away a bag of soil from the Tahoe Mausoleum, which may be to soothe the deep nostalgia for their hometown.

Similarly, praying for good luck is the main body of our folk culture, and it is the value orientation of people's lives accumulated collectively in the long-term production and life. Much of the modelling of Ninigou is full of rich and beautiful imagination. The Ninigou expresses people's desire for a perfect life and fulfilling life in the form and expresses the most ardent hope for the reality of life and utility. For example, welcoming good fortune, good luck, treasures and wealth, having precious children, longevity of the family, and living a happy life, are the most beautiful pictures of life that are often the objects of expression. Among the Ninigou, the modelling of this theme is expressed in the following ways: being the leader, being a marquis on the horse, soaring to greatness, being a marquis in every generation, the Phoenix Nirvana, sending a son to send blessings, and the tiger is powerful.

It is worth noting that this theme, such as "Seal the Marquis of Generations, Immediately Seal the Marquis", etc., mainly makes use of the characteristics of Chinese words with the same sound or sound similarity, and associates one word with another word in the homophonic borrowing relationship.

This form is a form of blessing harmony, i.e., the pronunciation of the name of a certain thing is in harmony with the sound of the word for good luck, and the word for this thing is taken as a symbol of blessing and good luck. This is because one of the main characteristics of the Chinese language is: that sound, form and meaning are three in one, generally speaking, a character form is a syllable and one or more meanings. For example, during the Chinese Lunar New Year, every family writes the word 福 on a square piece of red paper, and then puts the word 福 upside down on the door, making use of the harmonic sound of the word 福 to express prayers and good luck. This is to make use of the harmonic sound of the word 福, and to express the good intention of

praying for "happiness". During Chinese New Year festivals, there is one dish that is not missing from the dinner table, and that is fish. The main reason for this is that people like to use the harmonic sound of the word "fish" to envision a happy life with "more than enough for every year". The situation here is called "similarity rate" in folklore, i.e., replacing the person or event with something similar to it to get the corresponding



response.

FIGURE 23 Analysis of Cultural Value in Social Changes

Source: Created by author

In general, the cultural heritage of Ninigou is divided into the prehistoric legend stage, the agricultural society stage and the modern society stage. Based on these three stages, the cultural connotation of Ninigou is explained and interpreted in this way. Prehistoric legend stage Ninigou is the reproduction worship and ancestor

worship, is the external expression of primitive religious beliefs. With the arrival of the farming society, the Ninigou is also endowed with new social and cultural features and functions, and it is gradually added to people's real-life expectations and commercial economic factors. The Ninigou is both a sacred thing for ancestor worship and contains people's unlimited expectations for real life. Passed down from generation to generation by folk artists for thousands of years, the Ninigou has become a folk cultural event that entertains the gods and people. In modern society, the cultural characteristics of Huaiyang Ninigou have been gradually integrated into the modern cultural system, and most of them are expressed in the hope of a better life. With the rich and colourful culture of today's society, many cultural concepts of modern society have been implanted into the creative shapes of Ninigou. Similarly, the Huaiyang Temple Fair, which used to carry Ninigou, is no longer a mere faith-based activity, but a comprehensive experiential field that combines rituals, trading, and entertainment and examines, integrates, sifts, and re-creates the traditional culture of Ninigou.

4.3 Huaiyang Ninigou and Social Change Analysis

Parsons mentions that society is a holistic, balanced, self-mediating and mutually supportive system, with each part within the structure functioning for the whole; while maintaining a dynamic and balanced order of the whole through constant differentiation and integration(Parsons, 2013). Similarly, for culture to survive, it has to serve the material production of human beings, the socialization of its members, the social order, etc., and it also needs to remain adaptable and able to change in the face of changing conditions(Haviland et al., 2016).

Huaiyang Ninigou has indeed been integrated into all aspects of people's lives, including beliefs and worship, moral codes, ways of thinking and attitudes to life, all of which have exerted a great influence and played several social functions. However, with the change in society, how has the social function of Huaiyang Ninigou changed? From the functional theory, we know that the history of human society is a history of continuous evolution from low to high level, and social change is divided into four paradigms:

differentiation, improvement of adaptability, inclusion, and universalization of values(Parsons, 1964).

Hence, it's imperative to dissect the influence of societal evolution on Huaiyang Ninigou across various dimensions. In this section, the discussion utilizes Parsons' categorization of societal evolution to examine how the societal context, spanning from the "primitive stage" through the "agricultural stage" to the "modern stage," has shaped the internal and external dynamics of Ninigou craftsmanship.

4.3.1 Belief Gradually Weakens

Huaiyang Ninigou carries ancient rituals and primitive folk beliefs, and praying for blessings to drive away disasters and hoping for a good harvest is the basis for survival and development in primitive societies. In other words, due to the limitations of the ability to understand nature at that time, under the situation of low productivity level at that time, the forefathers were influenced by the factors of primitive religious beliefs as well as the worship of all living things and local farming customs, the forefathers prayed for peace and drove away the disasters through the Ninigou and hoped for good weather and good harvests in the coming year.

Similarly, in the early stage of the farming society, due to the low ability of the ancestors to understand and grasp nature. The worship and reverence for nature arose, and then they hoped to please the gods through certain ceremonial activities, praying for the protection of the gods of heaven and earth, and blessing the people living on this land in the hope of obtaining a good harvest. For a long time, this function has served people in terms of psychological comfort and fulfilment of spiritual needs.

In today's scientific and information age, most people still believe that Ninigou has the function of praying for blessings and peace, and still has a far-reaching influence, but in their hearts, they only think that it is just a kind of psychological comfort. The status of the thick Ninigou culture has become lower and lower, and the sacred function and significance of the past have been diluted step by step.

The author randomly interviewed pilgrims to the temple fair, most of them know that the Ninigou is the temple in the characteristics, but few people have gone to

buy, and in the local population are even fewer people to buy. Most people think that the Ninigou is made of mud is not hygienic, and black and black is not good-looking, for example, Ninigou can be used to cure the function of soil discomfort in their view is even more ridiculous. Young people said they would not go to buy Ninigou because the original cultural value of the exploration is lost, simply think it does not look good, very strange. Most of the purchases are foreign tourists, usually bought for children, given to relatives and friends or their own to keep a souvenir. Ninigou in the eyes of modern people just as a small souvenir to buy to visit the temple, passed down from ancient times to drive away evil spirits and pray for blessings, the function of seeking children in modern society is unable to gain a foothold.

It should be admitted that faith is a cultural phenomenon created and inherited by human beings at a specific stage of history to meet the needs of survival and development, especially the need for psychological security, and it has had certain beneficial effects in history. Even today, certain parts of folk beliefs, such as the folk psychology of seeking good fortune and avoiding bad luck, and certain taboos and medical treatments that conform to the laws of science, should be recognized, researched and carried forward. In other words, the folk beliefs inherited from ancient societies are the products of human society at a certain stage, and they are the people's worldviews, which operate in an inherent order.

However, nowadays the so-called shelter and power of the gods have become unimportant in daily life. The reason for this is, firstly, that the development of science and technology and the popularization of education have contributed to changes in the local people's ideological understanding of the function of praying for a good agricultural harvest. Specifically, the development of science has changed their way of life and production, which in turn has changed their worship of the spirits of all living things and the gods of heaven, and their belief in relying on science and technology and modern production methods to improve the efficiency of agricultural production and ensure a good agricultural harvest. Secondly, the influence of national cultural policies has to some extent led to the weakening of this function. In the special

historical period, Ninigou some beliefs and pray for blessings were classified as feudal superstition. So far, praying for blessings to drive away disasters and other content is only part of the old man in the interview. In short, due to the needs of production and life, its formation and inheritance stage is constantly strengthened, but in the contemporary development of the influence of internal and external factors, faith and worship are in gradual decline.

4.3.2 Lack of Practitioners

Huaiyang Ninigou is characterized by handmade kneading, originality and complicated production procedures, and the price of selling them is on the low side, which leads to a disproportion between the input and income of making Ninigou, bringing about a decrease in the motivation of Ninigou artists in the production and inheritance of Ninigou, and affecting the inheritance and development of Ninigou. Especially in the rapid development of society, these inefficient handmade skills are far less than going out to work to earn more money, which led to many young people are not willing to engage in the Ninigou production industry, are the old men in the lonely perseverance, which over time led to the loss of the old artisan's craft. In the modern market economy, the heritage and development of Huaiyang Ninigou has become difficult, making the craft have no successor, and facing a serious crisis.

In the field research, Shao Bo replied that with the trend of multiculturalism sweeping in, young people are busy working to earn money, for the traditional folk culture is not interested in, and not willing to take the time to learn. And the old artisan years with the age change, the heritage of the craft more and more urgent. The main reason is that the economic benefits of making Ninigou are not satisfactory enough, which leads to the traditional craft of Ninigou falling into the predicament of inheritance. Coupled with the Ninigou production development mode is relatively single, there is no specialized personnel training mode, and most of the amateurs do not have sculpture, or art skills, which is also not conducive to the development and inheritance of Ninigou. The whole inheritance process is stagnant, leading to the intensification of the process.

4.3.3 Out of Touch with Modern Life

The decline of Ninigou, a traditional folk craft deeply rooted in the agricultural civilization of Huaiyang, can be attributed to multifaceted socio-economic transformations characteristic of the transition to a modern industrial civilization. This transition has not only altered the material conditions under which such crafts were traditionally produced and consumed but has also led to significant shifts in cultural values and consumer behavior.

The advent of industrialization, marked by rapid technological advancement and urbanization, has significantly impacted the production and consumption patterns of traditional crafts like Ninigou. In an era dominated by mass production, the value placed on handcrafted, time-intensive goods has diminished. The efficiency, scalability, and cost-effectiveness of industrial production methods have set new standards for consumer goods, standards with which traditional crafts struggle to compete. Consequently, the demand for items that embody the simplicity, manual effort, and raw materials of agricultural societies has waned in favor of products that meet the modern criteria of safety, convenience, and sophistication.

Parallel to these material changes, there has been a profound shift in cultural values and consumer preferences. Modern consumer culture, characterized by a pursuit of novelty, efficiency, and status, often overlooks the historical and cultural significance embedded in traditional crafts. This shift is further exacerbated by the global spread of a homogenized culture through media and the internet, which often marginalizes local traditions and crafts. As a result, Ninigou and similar crafts face challenges in maintaining their relevance and appeal in a market where historical and cultural value often takes a backseat to practicality and prestige.

Moreover, the environmental impact of industrialization and the subsequent changes in living conditions have further alienated traditional crafts from the mainstream. The increasing awareness of environmental sustainability and the push towards more sustainable consumption practices could potentially offer a niche for traditional crafts; however, this requires a reevaluation of these crafts not only as cultural

artifacts but also as embodiments of sustainable production practices. Unfortunately, the perception of Ninigou as simple, fragile, and perhaps even obsolete items undermines their potential appeal in the context of modern environmental consciousness.

The erosion of a strong cultural identity and continuity in the face of modernization has led to a diminished appreciation for traditional crafts as bearers of community and cultural values. As societies evolve and diversify, the cohesive cultural narratives that supported the production and consumption of traditional crafts like Ninigou are weakened, leading to a fragmented market where such crafts struggle to find a stable and enduring consumer base. The role of these crafts in modern society is often relegated to that of souvenirs or objects of curiosity, rather than as integral elements of daily life or as meaningful expressions of cultural identity.

In conclusion, the decline of Ninigou in the modern era is emblematic of the broader challenges faced by traditional crafts in adapting to the rapid changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and globalization. To ensure the survival and revitalization of such crafts, it is imperative to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of their cultural, historical, and artistic value, alongside exploring avenues for innovation and adaptation that resonate with contemporary socio-economic and environmental realities. This requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including craftspersons, cultural institutions, policymakers, and consumers, to reposition traditional crafts within the modern industrial landscape as not only relics of the past but as living expressions of cultural heritage and sustainable practices.

4.3.4 Decorative and Entertainment Enhancement

The evolution of Ninigou within the modern societal context, particularly the trend towards creating larger sculptures, is a testament to the dynamic adaptability and resilience of traditional crafts in the face of changing cultural landscapes and aesthetic preferences. This transformation from small, handheld figures to monumental pieces not only signifies a shift in the craft's application and visibility but also reflects broader

trends in contemporary art and society's engagement with public spaces and cultural symbols.

The creation of larger Ninigou sculptures represents a significant artistic innovation, expanding the boundaries of traditional craft into the realm of public art and community engagement. By increasing the scale, artists and craftspeople are not just enhancing the visual impact of their work but are also making a bold statement about the relevance and adaptability of traditional crafts in contemporary culture. These larger-than-life representations serve as a bridge between the past and the present, allowing for a re-contextualization of traditional motifs and narratives in a manner that resonates with modern audiences. Placing giant Ninigou at intersections and public spaces transforms these areas into cultural landmarks, fostering a sense of community identity and belonging. Such installations invite public interaction and engagement, turning art into a participatory experience. They also play a crucial role in urban aesthetics, contributing to the beautification and cultural enrichment of public areas. This approach aligns with global trends where urban spaces are increasingly becoming canvases for cultural expression and dialogue, thereby elevating the status of Ninigou from mere crafts to integral components of public art and cultural heritage.

However, this trend towards creating larger Ninigou sculptures is not without its challenges. The increase in scale necessitates a reevaluation of materials, techniques, and structural integrity, potentially straying from traditional methods of production. This raises questions about authenticity and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Balancing the demands of modern aesthetics and the integrity of traditional craftsmanship is a delicate endeavor, requiring innovative solutions that respect the essence of Ninigou while embracing contemporary artistic expressions.

Furthermore, the commercial aspects of producing larger Ninigou sculptures must be considered. While increasing the visibility and appeal of Ninigou, there is a risk of cultural commodification, where the craft's cultural and artistic value is overshadowed by its commercial potential. Ensuring the sustainability of this trend involves careful consideration of the economic, environmental, and social impacts,

aiming to support the craft's development without compromising its cultural significance or the livelihoods of the artisans.



In conclusion, the evolution of Ninigou into larger sculptures is indicative of a broader movement towards integrating traditional crafts into contemporary cultural expressions and public spaces. This development reflects both the challenges and opportunities faced by traditional crafts in adapting to modern societies. As Ninigou continues to grow in size and prominence, it is imperative to navigate these changes with a commitment to preserving the craft's cultural integrity, fostering artistic innovation,



and enhancing its role as a vibrant component of public art and cultural identity. The journey of Ninigou from modest beginnings to monumental expressions symbolizes the enduring relevance and adaptability of cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world.

FIGURE 24 Giant Ninigou

Source: Photographed by the author

In the development of the new era, the subject matter and decorative nature of Ninigou have changed. Ninigou artists' choice of subject matter is more closely related to actual events, while patterns are no longer programmed, and there is more selective use of traditional female genitalia, sun patterns, Bagua patterns, etc. In the specific presentation, there are obvious changes and more daring. The specific presentation of the change is obvious, the important thing is that the new era of artists to make Ninigou more of their inner expression and the celebration of the good times.

On the other hand, other designs based on the characteristics of Ninigou are also appearing, such as the design of emoticons in chatting software, which, by combining the characteristics of Ninigou's decorations, have brought new design ideas to modern design and at the same time have brought entertainment to the extreme.

4.3.5 Participants' Role Transformation Over Time

Socio-culture comes from the sole evolutionary source of man (Parsons, 1980). In turn, social roles in societal culture encompass a set of norms of rights and duties and corresponding ways of behaving, which are closely related to an individual's social status and identity. Social roles can be regarded as a systematic structure consisting of multiple elements, which are interconnected and interact with each other to shape and regulate the role activities of individuals. These elements of social role structure mainly include responsibility and power, rights and obligations, class hierarchies, values, behavioural norms, ways of thinking, ideologies, abilities and knowledge. With the development of the times, Ninigou participants have undergone different role changes at different times, which the author analyzes through the perspectives of Ninigou artists and the general public.

4.3.5.1 Role Change of Ninigou Artists

In the primitive period of Ninigou, Ninigou artists mainly play the expressive role. Instead of obtaining economic benefits or remuneration, they were more

interested in passing on and displaying their Ninigou skills and serving as offerings for ceremonial activities. Specifically, the role of Ninigou artists in social change is mainly in the following aspects:

Firstly, it is the pure love for the Ninigou craft without any utilitarianism. In social change, one of the main roles of Ninigou artists should be the initiator of Ninigou craft, and this role is indispensable in any stage. Ren Guohe, president of the Ninigou Association, said, in the past, when I followed my father to learn the Ninigou, the most important thing was the extreme love for the craft, not presenting any utilitarian factors, but thinking about how to learn this skill well and imagining how I could independently make Ninigou.

The second is to take the initiative to cultivate Ninigou inheritors. As society changes and enters the agricultural period, the old Ninigou artists often pass on the skill to their children to avoid losing the skill. Xu Pin, the son of Xu Shuzhang, said it was a great pleasure to learn the art from his father. At the same time, under my father's influence, I also taught my apprentice the Ninigou skills I had learnt, which was a very meaningful thing for me.

In general, in the inheritance of Huaiyang Ninigou, the veteran artists have a high social status, and more importantly, they are willing to actively participate in the publicity and promotion of Ninigou regardless of the returns.

With the change of society, under the modern stage of Huaiyang Ninigou, the attitude and ideology of Ninigou artists towards the inheritance and development of Ninigou have changed greatly. The significant feature is that the promotion of the intrinsic meaning of Ninigou and the pursuit of economic benefits have become the main goals. Through the research, we know that nowadays, the inheritors of Ninigou are all eloquent in interviews about the cultural connotation behind the Ninigou, and more importantly, in their ideology, getting rewards and honours through the production of Ninigou has become the source of their livelihood and the goal of their pursuit. Ninigou artists consider this as a normal income from labour, gradually changing the previous voluntary and selfless sharing and inheritance.

In the contemporary model of transmission, there are two notable shifts. First, while folk artisans continue to dedicate themselves to teaching Ninigou techniques, the motivation has shifted from a pure passion and affinity for the craft to a combination of economic incentives and the quest for recognition. Xu Pin has observed that in today's market-driven economy, Ninigou creators must also provide for their families. Given the market constraints and relatively modest income generated by Ninigou, coupled with the time-intensive nature of its production, offering free training for the sake of preserving the tradition is economically unsustainable for the artists. This financial reality contributes to the reluctance among the younger generation to take up this heritage craft. Secondly, with local government backing the conservation and propagation of Huaiyang Ninigou, a novel training paradigm has emerged. Artists have begun to establish designated training centers for systematic instruction, moving away from the conventional apprenticeship model of familial transmission. My visit to Shao Bo's Ninigou studio revealed a structured approach to selecting and educating apprentices, demonstrating an uptick in youth engagement compared to previous years. This approach to Ninigou craft, characterized by cooperative efforts and year-round production, deviates from the past practice of seasonal crafting aligned with agricultural downtime and temple fairs. Instead, it adopts an organized production chain through contractual agreements, marking a significant evolution from the traditional community-based and group production methods.

Secondly, Ninigou inheritors have become more dependent on local government support. During the Xu Shuzhang interviews with the veteran artisans, the author found that their subsidies and support from the government are much higher than the inheritance of the mud Ninigou craft itself. They hope that the government will give more financial and welfare support. During social change, most of them have also changed from active inheritance under the traditional inheritance model to a passive one that accepts the government's standardized management. They are required by government rules and regulations to complete the inheritance tasks and standardize the inheritance methods. Xu Shuzhang said, now our older generation of Ninigou artists is

getting older and older, the inheritance of skills is not overnight, we hope that the government can give us more support and help so that we can do this work with peace of mind.

4.3.5.2 Role Change of the General Public

From the perspective of the development history of Ninigou, the social role of the public has also gone through different stages, namely, the active participation stage, the passive participation stage, and the pure consumption stage.

From the birth to the formation of Ninigou, it is inseparable from the participation and inheritance of the general public. In the traditional stage, the buyers of Ninigou belong to the active participation stage, and the active participation of residents and buyers effectively guarantees that their inheritance will last and be widely spread. In this stage, community residents mainly play the role of active participants, mainly manifested as follows: Firstly, the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of the people is high. The deep-rooted cultural qualities of the traditional culture of the Central Plains inherited by the Ninigou cater for the cultural needs of the residents and gain their recognition. Secondly, the deep folk beliefs and cultural factors of Ninigou can provide psychological and spiritual comfort and support for the public. Craftsman Shao Bo said that one of the most important factors of Huaiyang Ninigou is to pray for the blessing of heaven. This is passed down from our old ancestors, praying for blessings, blessings to the people, good harvests in agriculture and animal husbandry and so on during the annual rituals. However, the old people used to believe in it more, and now we, the young people, have less faith in it.

With the reform and opening up, a market economy, diversified information channels and other factors, the public to live a good life, began to go out to work tide, and the Huaiyang Ninigou also gradually faded. At this time, people's inheritance of Ninigou has gradually changed from the stage of participation to the stage of pure consumption. Specifically, the change of ideological concepts led to the improvement of scientific and cultural quality and the understanding of traditional culture in the folk beliefs of the bias and misunderstanding, on the other hand, the community

residents by the influence of the market economy tide began to pursue the actual economic benefits, Shao Bo mentioned that the current environment is everyone is busy earning money, many people are busy with their affairs, and not like that during the agricultural leisure time to do the Ninigou. In the present time, the continuous iteration of Ninigou is more for higher sales and catering to the market.

Overall, the degree of cultural self-awareness determines how well the Ninigou is passed on. Under the current inheritance model, the public does not recognise the role performance as the main body of the inheritance, such as some people do not recognise the importance and significance of Ninigou; some people's positioning of Ninigou is limited to leisure and entertainment. These role changes show behaviours that affect the inheritance and development of Ninigou to a certain extent.

4.3.6 Analysis of the Government's Attitude towards Huaiyang Ninigou

From the birth to the development of the Huaiyang Ninigou, the social roles played by the local government towards the Huaiyang Ninigou have varied greatly in different historical periods. From its birth to the present, the roles played by the ruling and administrative classes towards the Huaiyang Ninigou have been complex, with some inhibiting, some encouraging, and some allowing them to develop. Their attitudes towards Ninigou are made up of complex social factors, specifically, the cultural literacy of different ruling classes and the roles they have assumed have had an impact on the development of Huaiyang Ninigou.

In the journey of Ninigou's development, the government's role has transitioned through stages of being a "bystander," to a "supporter," and ultimately becoming an "advocate." Initially, governmental involvement was minimal, observing the craft's evolution from a distance without direct engagement. Over time, recognizing the cultural and economic value of Ninigou, the government shifted to a supportive role, providing resources and aid to sustain and nurture the craft. This support paved the way for the final transformation into an advocate, actively promoting Ninigou through policies, funding, and public awareness campaigns, underscoring its commitment to preserving this integral part of cultural heritage.

During the initial stages of societal development, leaders, burdened by the demands of production and sustenance, adopted a laissez-faire approach towards traditional crafts like Ninigou, allowing them to evolve autonomously as an adjunct to grassroots self-governance. With the advent of the agricultural era following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, local governments vigorously promoted folk crafts to enhance the leisure time of the populace, leading to a swift advancement in Ninigou crafts under governmental endorsement. This period saw a notable enhancement in both the craftsmanship and cultural significance of Ninigou, marking a distinct evolution from its earlier forms.

The reform and opening-up period heralded a shift in cultural policies, with increased state endorsement for traditional crafts. From the central to local cultural administrations, a proactive stance was adopted in the preservation and promotion of Ninigou, culminating in the formulation of relevant legal frameworks and regulations. The pivotal moment arrived in 2005 when the State Council issued directives for the robust protection of China's intangible cultural heritage, initiating the process for the recognition and evaluation of national intangible cultural heritage masterpieces. This endeavor bore fruit in June 2009 when Huaiyang Ninigou was acknowledged as part of Henan Province's provincial intangible cultural heritage, followed by its inclusion in the national intangible cultural heritage list by the State Council on 11 November 2014.

This era characterized the government's role transitioning from passive observer to active advocate and protector of Ninigou. Local governments, in particular, played a crucial role by providing policy support aimed at facilitating the craft's transmission and innovation. Such support mechanisms have engendered a novel paradigm for the inheritance and evolution of Ninigou, underpinned by government participation or leadership. Crucially, this government involvement has significantly propelled Ninigou's development in the contemporary context, laying the groundwork for its sustainable growth and adaptation to modern demands and opportunities.

4.4 Comparative Analysis of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou

4.4.1 Tookata Sia-Kaban

The Tookata Sia-Kaban, deriving its name from 'tukatha', the Thai term for 'doll', represents a distinctive form of ceramic artistry prevalent during the 14th to 16th centuries in the kiln sites surrounding Si Satchanalai. These figurines, typically fashioned in the likeness of a seated female figure either cross-legged or in the revered Thai position with both feet extended backwards, are characterized by their maternal posture of cradling an infant. A notable feature in some specimens, including the one under discussion, is the pronounced bulge on one cheek indicative of a betel quid, consumed for its mild narcotic effects, thereby adding a layer of cultural significance to the artifact. Each figurine is adorned with a celadon glaze, enhancing its aesthetic appeal. The purpose behind the creation of these figurines remains a subject of scholarly debate. One prevailing theory suggests their role as talismanic objects designed to divert malevolent spirits from expectant mothers to the dolls themselves, potentially serving as a protective measure during pregnancy. Alternatively, their function as ritual offerings has also been considered, a hypothesis supported by the frequent discovery of figures with either detached or reattached heads, hinting at ritualistic sacrifice or, as some scholars propose, the result of inherent structural vulnerabilities within the figurines' design (Volunteers, 2009).

Instances of Tookata Sia-Kaban are preserved in prominent cultural institutions, including the National Museum in Bangkok and the British Museum in London, attesting to their historical and cultural significance. The specific example highlighted herein remains in exemplary condition, devoid of notable damages. The distinct betel quid feature is prominently visible, and the artifact exhibits signs of age-related wear on its glaze, factors that collectively underscore its authenticity and value as a fine specimen of this unique artistic tradition.



FIGURE 25 Tookata Sia-Kaban in UK art market

Source: World Art (2023,Nov 30). Rare Antique Asian, Islamic & Colonial Decorative Arts

Retrieved from <https://www.michaelbackmanltd.com/object/7733/>

The Tookata Sia-Kaban, is a traditional figurine crafted from soil, with its origins tracing back to the Sukhothai Era. This distinctive type of doll is renowned for its ability to mimic human gestures and expressions. Crafted primarily from clay, these dolls come in the likenesses of boys and girls, depicted in a variety of poses. The Tookata Sia-Kaban holds a symbolic role, acting as a stand-in for its owner to absorb any potential ailments, harm, or danger that may befall them or their relatives. The creation process of a Tookata Sia-Kaban is straightforward, emphasizing accessibility over intricacy.

Female representations in the Tookata Sia-Kaban collection are characterized by their hair styled in a bun, a depiction of modesty with a bare chest, and are often seen sitting upright. These figurines may be adorned with accessories such as fans or babies, or engaged in cultural gestures like holding flowers or pressing palms together in a gesture of respect. Male dolls, similarly bare-chested, are distinguished by their plump cheeks—suggestive of betel nut chewing—and are depicted in activities such as playing musical instruments, reverently bowing, or holding a fighting cock, embodying the vibrancy of cultural pastimes. The diversity in the Tookata Sia-Kaban poses reflects the rich tapestry of lifestyle practices across different historical periods. A unique tradition associated with these dolls is the removal of the head upon completion, a ritual that has lent the figurines their name, Tookata Sia-Kaban, meaning 'headless' or 'losing head' doll. This practice imbues the dolls with a profound cultural significance, symbolizing protection and the absorption of misfortune in place of their owners (Veeravong, 2001).

The Tookata Sia-Kaban represents a unique and ancient form of doll-making that persists within Thai communities, cherished and transmitted through generations for its profound cultural significance. Unlike other dolls that are revered for bringing good fortune to their owners, the Tookata Sia-Kaban serves a distinct purpose as a protective talisman, designed to ward off malevolence and misfortune from the owner and their kin. Misuse of such a doll, however, can lead to dire consequences, including the potential for lethal repercussions for the owner. Dating back to the Tavaravadee Period (11th – 14th centuries of the Buddhist Era), the oldest known Tookata Sia-Kaban was discovered among the historical ruins of Ban Khu Muang and Ban Juksi in Ang Thong Province. This particular artifact, crafted to resemble a human figure with a female head and a specific hairstyle, exemplifies the doll's long-standing presence in Thai culture. The majority of Tookata Sia-Kabans from this era, typically fashioned from earthenware or stucco, have been found in various states of disrepair, often missing heads or limbs. By the Sukhothai Period (19th – 20th centuries of the Buddhist Era), the craftsmanship of the Tookata Sia-Kaban evolved to include a green

coating over the earthenware, with some figures holding Pod Duang currency and most lacking heads, mirroring the characteristics of dolls used in religious ceremonies or offered to spirits.

Tookata Sia-Kaban rituals and beliefs are widespread across Thailand, with specific traditions tied to the Songkran Festival's merit-making ceremonies. Some communities conduct the Sia-Kaban Ritual, aimed at fortune restoration, as an integral part of their cultural heritage. In these rituals, dolls are crafted from clay in the likeness of each family member and their pets, then ceremonially damaged at a T-junction to symbolize the breaking away of bad luck.

This practice, deeply rooted in Thai tradition, reflects the community's enduring belief in the protective and fortune-restoring powers of the Tookata Sia-Kaban, a belief passed down from ancient times.

4.4.2 Comparison of Craft Value

The creation process of the Tookata Sia-Kaban involves a meticulous series of steps, beginning with the initial shaping of the soil. Artisans may sculpt the soil freely by hand or, for larger-scale production, utilize molds to cast numerous figures efficiently. Once the basic form of the doll is shaped, additional features such as limbs, patterns, and facial details are applied before the piece is left to dry in a shaded area.

Following the drying stage, the doll undergoes its first firing, known as biscuit firing, in a kiln at a temperature of 800 degrees Celsius for a duration of 8 to 14 hours. This initial baking hardens the doll, preparing it for further embellishment. After this phase, craftsmen adorn the workpiece with paints, adding vibrant colours and intricate details to bring the figure to life.

Once the paint has dried, a clear solution is applied to the doll to seal in the decorations. The piece is then subjected to a second firing, referred to as glost firing, at an increased temperature of 1,200 degrees Celsius for 10 to 16 hours. This step not only solidifies the applied coatings but also enhances the durability and aesthetic appeal of the doll. The doll remains in the kiln until it has fully cooled, ensuring a smooth and even finish.

Upon removal from the kiln, the Tookata Sia-Kaban is carefully cleaned with a wet rag to remove any residue or dust accumulated during the firing process. The final stage involves additional decorations and finishing touches that refine the doll's appearance, readying it for collection or display. This comprehensive process, from molding the soil to the final finishing, encapsulates the traditional craftsmanship and cultural heritage embodied in each Tookata Sia-Kaban.

Tookata Sia-Kaban was first made during the Sukhothai period, and the materials are local clays or can be mixed with other materials. In addition to clay, the making of Tookata Sia-Kaban requires tools such as heating ovens, paints, brushes, sponges, wooden sticks, measuring tape, etc. The production process is divided into techniques such as scratching, carving, and grooving. The process of its production is divided into techniques such as scratching, carving, grooving, and painting black patterns under the glaze, specifically, into steps such as kneading, carving, shade drying, firing, glaze soaking, cleaning, and decorative details. After researching with the staff of the National Museum in Bangkok, I learnt that the making of Tookata Sia-Kaban requires a great deal of care and patience. Although it is mainly made from locally produced clay, it is sometimes mixed with other materials, such as sand and more fire-resistant soil, to enhance its texture. Such materials enable Tookata Sia-Kaban to remain sturdy and unbreakable, with a long-lasting vibrant appearance. As far as the production process is concerned, both Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou generally fall under the category of handmade products, but there is a difference in the exact steps involved, with Ninigou having a more complicated process.

The important thing is that each Tookata Sia-Kaban is unique, and its shape mimics human behaviour, with both men's and women's movements carefully portrayed. In other words, the decorative motifs and colours of each era of Tookata Sia-Kaban are different from those of other eras, and the image of each Tookata Sia-Kaban usually reflects the lifestyle and needs of a different era. The subject matter is both male and female, with female Tookata Sia-Kaban presenting the image of a mother holding a child, who may be holding a fan, a child, or other symbolic objects in her hands. Male

dolls, on the other hand, are usually shown in various poses such as topless, wearing cloth underneath, imitating betel nut smoking, or playing music. It is worth noting that Tookata Sia-Kaban is usually of a single solid colour - the colour inherent in the clay itself, which appears more translucent overall after firing. As time progressed, the process of making Tookata Sia-Kaban was upgraded, and different glaze colours were created, including green glaze type, white glaze type and brown glaze type. These different glaze colours give them rich colours. It is easy to see that the Tookata Sia-Kaban are most different from the Ninigou in terms of subject matter and shape - one is created with a human and the other with an animal. Further analysis reveals that the two are also very different in terms of colours, with the Tookata Sia-Kaban being presented in monochrome and the Ninigou in multi-colour.



FIGURE 26 Tookata Sia-Kaban

Source: Photographed by the author

4.4.3 Comparison of Cultural Value

The Tookata Sia-Kaban emerges from a deeply rooted belief within Thai culture, constructed as a mechanism for warding off potential threats and adversities to individuals and their families. This artifact is distinguished from other doll forms by its specific purpose: rather than being an object of worship for bringing auspiciousness to its owner, the Tookata Sia-Kaban is deployed as a protective talisman against malevolence and misfortune. Misapplication of the doll, however, is believed to rebound adverse outcomes onto the owner, with extreme scenarios positing the risk of death.

Historically, the earliest recorded instance of a Tookata Sia-Kaban dates back to the Tavaravadee Era, between the 11th and 14th centuries of the Buddhist Era. Archaeological findings from Ban Khu Muang and Ban Juksi in Ang Thong Province have unearthed figures made from earthenware or stucco, often in a state of disrepair, such as missing heads or limbs. By the Sukhothai Era, during the 19th to 20th centuries of the Buddhist Era, the craftsmanship evolved to include a green glaze over the earthenware and representations holding Pod Duang currency, with many figures intentionally rendered headless to align with the doll's characteristic features for religious and spiritual offerings.

The Tookata Sia-Kaban is imbued with a myriad of cultural and spiritual significances, reflecting ancient Thai society's strategies for confronting illness and misfortune. Pregnant women, facing high mortality rates due to inadequate medical resources, were particularly vulnerable. The dolls served as a spiritual safeguard, a surrogate to bear the brunt of spiritual threats or illnesses that were believed to afflict the living due to malevolent spirits.

In Thai lexicon, "Kaban" signifies skull or head, which underscores the doll's role as a stand-in for its owner, bearing dangers on their behalf. This practice stems from a period when local medical practices were insufficient to address health crises effectively. Amid these challenges, the Tookata Sia-Kaban was a manifestation of the community's efforts to protect its members from spiritual harm. It was not uncommon for dolls to be intentionally disfigured or described in derogatory terms as a means to deter

spirits from claiming young lives, a testament to the pervasive belief that physical beauty attracted malevolent spiritual attention. The Tookata Sia-Kaban's function extends beyond mere protection against spirits; it also serves as a ritualistic tool in ceremonies aiming to restore fortune or counteract negative influences. During the Songkran Festival, for instance, the Sia-Kaban Ritual involves creating dolls to represent family members and pets, which are then symbolically destroyed at a crossroads to mislead and appease spirits, thereby safeguarding the living.

Tookata Sia-Kaban is also called a head-throwing doll. In the past, Thais believed that there were ghosts that enslaved people by taking their souls. When the soul is taken the person dies. Because of this belief, when a woman gave birth to her child, one would make a mother who would hold her child while then breaking its neck. This ritual is called Tookata Sia-Kaban and then the doll would be disposed of. This ritual is believed to trick the ghosts - the mother and her child are dead and the ghosts will not come back to haunt them.

In other words, in every era, when the Tookata Sia-Kaban is finished, the head of the doll is cut off from the body or punched out, which is one of the reasons that coincidentally explains why the Tookata Sia-Kaban is also called the "headless doll" (Miksic, 2009). This is one of the reasons why Tookata Sia-Kaban is most different from Ninigou.

In Thailand, children are born with lovely faces, but it is feared that ghosts may take a liking to these children and try to take them away. So instead of praising a newborn child as "cute", the Thai people try to isolate the ghosts by describing the child's appearance with a different name. In ancient times, the royal family made dolls specifically to free newborns from ghosts, for example, they would scratch the doll's face with a knife to make it look more blemished and wrinkled, thus disturbing the ghosts, or this was a trick of the ancient people. When someone was very sick in a house they would use the doll to honour the ghost, who took the doll and the real patient would survive safely. There are similarities between this and the folk beliefs of Ninigou, both of which are the desire for a better life while dispelling bad things.



FIGURE 27 Device used to Place Tookata Sia-Kaban

Source: Photographed by the author

Specifically, on the one hand, ancient people believed that the causes of various illnesses were related to ghosts, so they made dolls to trick the ghosts, the dolls were usually an image of a mother holding a child. These dolls were used to make offerings to ghosts to threaten the ghosts not to harm the mother and child. Sometimes cushions made of banana peels are added and then these dolls are placed at the three-way intersection, supposedly to protect the mother and child by confusing the ghost or taking the life of the mother and child instead of the ghost.

On the other hand, people would use these dolls to confuse the invoking ghosts or to defeat those who were harming them through magical incantations. Sometimes needles might be inserted into the dolls to inflict damage, and body parts of the dolls representing the enemy might be broken, which also represented damage to

the enemy, sometimes resulting in pain or even death. Similarly, in ancient times, many issues remained unresolved, especially about the life and death of pregnant women, as problems during labour led to high mortality rates. Childbirth requires a midwife, and an inadequate midwife could be a danger to both the mother and the child, leading to the risk that both mother and child could be exposed to a variety of illnesses, resulting in far more deaths than survivors, and the people of the time mistakenly believed that ghosts had taken their lives, and therefore used this ritual to hold the mother and child in peace.

Tookata Sia-Kaban were even made for adults experiencing strange symptoms, suspecting witchcraft attacks, bad luck, or other misfortunes. These dolls may be made to represent the sick person who loses or breaks their neck in a ritual that communicates to the spirits that the victim is dead and there is no longer a need to take the patient's life. These rituals usually end when the doll loses its neck.



FIGURE 28 Tookata Sia-Kaban in Ritual

Source: Public Organization(2023,Nov 30) . Types of Handicrafts Sia-Kaban Doll

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In short, culture is the embodiment of a set of values, a set of ideas, a set of social order, and a social structure, and this embodiment is expressed not only in language but also in various decorative shapes and symbols(Fang, 2020). Both Thai and Chinese traditional cultures indeed contain a deep belief system, which seems to be related to witchcraft or superstition and is used to protect people from various dangers and misfortunes, such as the invasion of diseases and various injuries.

4.4.4 Heritage and Development Analysis

In contemporary times, the craft of producing Tookata Sia-Kaban persists among artisans specializing in Celadon Ware within Sukhothai Province. While these dolls are no longer created for their original magical intents, they have transcended into cultural relics of significant value, heralding from the Srisatchanalai Era. Today, the Tookata Sia-Kaban is esteemed not merely as a collector's item but as a profound emblem that mirrors the historical livelihood and cultural essence of the Thai populace. This transition marks the evolution of the Tookata Sia-Kaban from a functional object within spiritual practices to a cherished artifact, embodying the rich heritage and artisanal craftsmanship of Thailand.

Although Tookata Sia-Kaban is handmade without a specific production community, they serve multiple purposes in society. Not only do these clay sculptures reflect the beliefs of the people, but they also highlight the high value placed on aesthetics and artistic detail, as well as respect for tradition and religion.

It is worth noting that the far-reaching historical background and cultural significance of Tookata Sia-Kaban are dissolving in contemporary society. To my research, Tookata Sia-Kaban has been largely lost in the market and can only be found in museums, and through interviews with some university students and vendors in Thailand, they are unaware of the heavy weight of Tookata Sia-Kaban. Through interviews with some university students and vendors in Thailand, it is learnt that they do not know much about the heavy craftsmanship and cultural characteristics carried by Tookata Sia-Kaban, which is unfavourable to its inheritance and development, and at the same time, it is also a cause for concern. The Tookata Sia-Kaban is experiencing a

similar plight in the development of society, with most people displaying it as a mere "decoration" and the cultural identity behind it dissipating. Since ancient times, the beliefs surrounding the Tookata Sia-Kaban have been integral to Thai culture. However, as times have evolved and new cultural practices have been adopted, some of these traditional beliefs have faded into the background. Despite the Tookata Sia-Kaban no longer being utilized in rituals as it once was, its legacy endures within museums where it serves an educational purpose. These dolls are preserved as historical artifacts, offering future generations insight into their ancestors' lives and the cultural events that shaped them. This transition underscores the adaptation of cultural heritage to contemporary contexts, ensuring that the historical significance and cultural narratives of the Thai people are not lost but rather shared and understood by new generations.

Through a comparative study, the similarities and differences between Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou on the artistic and social levels can be drawn as shown in the following table.

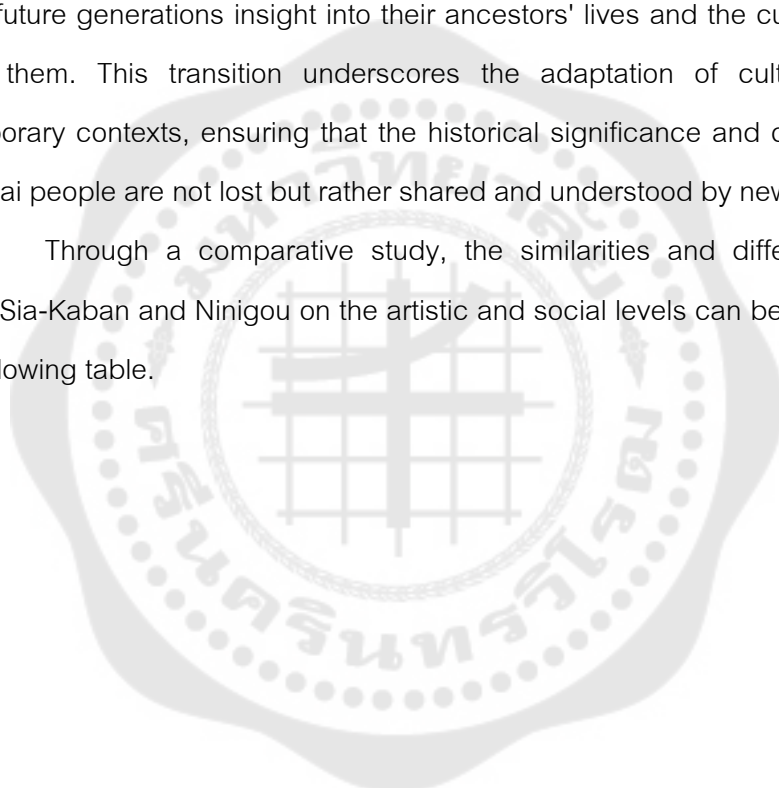


TABLE 2 A Comparative Analysis of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou

Detail	Tookata Sia-Kaban	Ninigou
Raw Materials	Soil and other material mixes	Local yellow clay
Colour	Green glaze type, white glaze type and brown glaze type	Overall black as the background, red, yellow, cyan and white as accents
Production Process	Handmade with scratching, carving, grooving	A combination of handmade and batch production
Shape	Most of them are figures, and most of them are women holding children	Animals as the main subject, crude and grotesque, usually 5 to 8 cm in size
Culture and Belief	They were used to deceive ghosts not to harm people and to send good wishes	Celebration of life, worship of gods and ancestors, and prayers for good luck
Social Change and Development	It was owned by the royal family, but later it was mainly made by individuals	Family-based succession with small workshops, relatively well developed and moderately recognised

4.4.5 The Evolution and Comparative Cultural Significance of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou in Contemporary Society

The evolution of Tookata Sia-Kaban, within the broader framework of traditional crafts adapting to contemporary societies, offers a compelling case for comparative analysis with Huaiyang Ninigou. Both crafts, emerging from distinct cultural and historical contexts—Tookata Sia-Kaban from Thailand and Huaiyang Ninigou from China—share common trajectories in their transition from objects of practical and spiritual significance to modern cultural emblems. This comparative study, grounded in sociological and folkloristic methodologies, aims to illuminate the nuanced processes of cultural adaptation, preservation, and transformation, highlighting the complex interplay between tradition and modernity.

About cultural significance and transformation, Tookata Sia-Kaban, originally imbued with magical intentions and used in rituals, reflects the spiritual and cultural ethos of the Thai people during the Srisatchanalai Era. Similarly, Ninigou, with its roots in agricultural societies, served not only as a pastime but also carried symbolic meanings, embodying wishes for prosperity and protection. The shift from their traditional roles to becoming cultural relics and decorative items underscores a broader trend of secularization and aestheticization of religious and magical artifacts in modern societies. This transition reveals how traditional crafts are recontextualized within contemporary cultural discourses, serving as bridges to the past and as mediums for cultural identity and heritage preservation.

About artisanal craftsmanship and societal value, the artisanal craftsmanship of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou signifies a deep respect for traditional skills and aesthetics, highlighting the intrinsic value placed on artistic detail, creativity, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Despite the lack of a specific production community for Tookata Sia-Kaban, its continued production among Celadon Ware artisans in Sukhothai Province exemplifies the enduring dedication to craft traditions. Similarly, the persistence of Ninigou craftsmanship, despite industrialization and modernization pressures, reflects a commitment to cultural identity and heritage.

Both crafts, therefore, serve as testaments to the resilience of traditional artisanal practices in the face of changing economic and social landscapes.

About challenges of cultural continuity and market dynamics, the diminishing presence of Tookata Sia-Kaban in markets and its relegation to museums, coupled with a lack of awareness among younger generations and vendors, mirrors the challenges faced by Ninigou in maintaining its cultural relevance and market viability. This situation highlights the critical role of cultural policy, education, and market innovation in ensuring the survival and revitalization of traditional crafts. The market dynamics, characterized by changing consumer preferences and the global commodification of cultural products, pose significant challenges to the sustainability of traditional crafts. The comparative analysis reveals the need for innovative strategies that balance cultural preservation with market adaptation, such as incorporating digital technologies for promotion and engaging in cultural tourism initiatives.

About educational and cultural policy implications, the preservation of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou as museum artifacts, while beneficial for educational purposes, raises questions about the role of cultural policies in facilitating the active transmission of traditional crafts. There is a pressing need for integrated cultural policies that support artisan communities, promote craftsmanship education, and foster a market for traditional crafts that respects their cultural significance while making them relevant to contemporary consumers. Such policies should aim to enhance public awareness, appreciation, and engagement with traditional crafts, ensuring their continuity as living traditions rather than mere historical curiosities.

All in all, the comparative analysis of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou reveals the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by traditional crafts in contemporary societies. It underscores the importance of understanding traditional crafts within their socio-cultural contexts, the dynamics of cultural transformation, and the strategies for preserving and revitalizing these crafts in modern times. By examining the similarities and differences in the evolution of Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou, this analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex processes

through which traditional crafts navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity, ultimately enriching our appreciation of cultural diversity and heritage.



CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Discussion

As a carrier of folk life and people's aesthetic ideals, crafts carry the colourfulness of our ancient civilization that has been accumulated over generations. It is precise because of the accumulation of rich culture that our crafts are so distinctive and colourful. As a carrier of traditional culture, the cultural essence of Huaiyang Ninigou is not only a manifestation of the people's collective unconsciousness but also contains a wealth of sociological and folklore content, which still has a profound impact and positive effect in today's ever-changing society.

5.1 Conclusion

The structure of the article is divided into four aspects. Firstly, the author starts with the craft characteristics of Huaiyang Ninigou and analyzes the names, shapes, patterns, colours and craftsmanship of Huaiyang Ninigou. Secondly, the author starts with the cultural characteristics of Ninigou analyzes the cultural connotations behind them, and specifically divides them into two parts: fertility worship and folk beliefs. Thirdly, it combines the craftsmanship and culture of Ninigou with social change, looking at the essence through the phenomenon and analyzing the role of Ninigou in social change according to the division of subject, object and intermediary. Finally, it is to analyze a multi-dimensional comparison between Tookata Sia-Kaban and Ninigou, summarizing the similarities and differences in the styles, craftsmanship, and cultural aspects of the clay sculptures of China and Thailand.

In analyzing the craft value of Huaiyang Ninigou, this paper divides it into three stages: Single Stage, Composite Stage, and Commodity Stage, with each stage corresponding to different craft characteristics. Specifically, in the single stage, the Huaiyang Ninigou is a faithful reproduction of existing things, also known as the imitation stage, in which the modelling of Ninigou is mostly an imitation of a single primitive animal, such as pig, horse, dog and so on. Patterns are presented as an orderly, patterned arrangement of dots and lines. The colours are usually black, white, red,

green and yellow, which can be obtained directly or indirectly in nature, and each step of the production process is completely dependent on the craftsman. In the composite stage, the Ninigou is the processing and performance of some animals in society, in this stage, the modelling has changed from the fixed to a variety of patterns, patterns also a more lively sense of animation, with the progress of the society, the production process has made some progress in this stage, at the same time, the Ninigou artists began to consciously try to add their expression of emotion. In the commodity stage, the Ninigou overall is the deconstruction and reconstruction of social things, is the social reappearance, the Ninigou theme began to cater to the society, more show the trend and secularity, with the acrylic and other painting pigments and the emergence of the new style of paintbrush, make the Ninigou no matter in the expression of the pattern and the colour of the presentation of the obvious changes, the production process level is due to the introduction of the firing technology, makes the Ninigou The production process is due to the introduction of firing technology, so that the Ninigou has become more sturdy than before, more convenient to carry. Precisely, the sales form of Ninigou also borrowed the development of society from offline to online and offline synchronization, Ninigou artist Shao Bo even in the live platform for Ninigou production process display.

In analyzing the cultural values of Huaiyang Ninigou, this paper divides them into three stages: the primitive stage, the farming stage, and the modern stage, with each stage corresponding to different cultural characteristics. Specifically, in the primitive stage, Huaiyang Ninigou carries the ancestors' longing for the protection of nature's gods, the memory of their ancestors and the hope for their children and grandchildren's reproduction; in the stage of farming, with the deepening of the understanding, they carry the ancestors' longing for a good harvest, and, more importantly, in this stage, they express the unremitting pursuit of a good life and the fervent hope of the people with the help of the Ninigou. In the modern stage, the decorative and entertaining nature of Ninigou is increasing, and they carry more functions of souvenirs and decorations.

In analyzing the social changes affecting Ninigou, it can be concluded that the hidden cultural characteristics of Ninigou have gradually given way to the external characteristics of the crafts, marking a transformation from sacredness to secularity and entertainment. Specifically, with social and scientific developments, the beliefs and power of god have gradually weakened. Furthermore, the inefficiency of the traditional craft, influenced by seasons and other factors, has led to a disconnect with contemporary times. It is noteworthy that, due to the changing nature of the times, the inheritance of Ninigou has shifted from active to passive, increasingly intertwined with utilitarian motives, and the traditional method of teaching by word and example has been replaced by today's commercialized training. As the government's stance on Ninigou has evolved from mere spectatorship to support and then to advocacy, the general public's engagement has also shifted from active participation to passive consumption.

Admittedly, the problem of the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese crafts seems to exist in Thailand as well, and I found a similar situation in the Tookata Sia-Kaban, where these deep cultural things are gradually lost in the materialistic consumer era as society changes.

Tookata Sia-Kaban and the Huaiyang Ninigou, as clay sculpture art forms within their respective cultures, carry the profound traditions and folk beliefs, demonstrating the universality of expressing spiritual faith and aesthetic pursuit through handicrafts. These art forms are the crystallization of artisans' wisdom and creativity, serving not only as objects of aesthetic appreciation in primitive societies but also fulfilling specific social functions. Whether symbolizing protection and healing or acting as talismans against evil for safety, health, and well-being, they are inseparable from their cultural contexts.

However, significant differences emerge between Tookata Sia-Kaban and Huaiyang Ninigou in terms of religious background, form and colour, and their significance within the social and cultural milieu. Tookata Sia-Kaban, closely associated with ghostly spirits and Thai folk beliefs, serves explicit religious ceremonial purposes. Its variety in form and colour reflects Thailand's rich cultural and artistic traditions. In

contrast, Huaiyang Ninigou more profoundly signifies the Chinese cultural wishes for family and personal happiness, with its imagery and colour evolution closely linked to the changes in Chinese society, revealing unique aesthetic preferences and cultural values within Chinese culture. These differences not only highlight the distinctiveness between the two cultures but also illustrate humanity's diverse choices in life, faith, and artistic expression across different cultural backgrounds.

5.2 Discussion

The development of the society is always changing the traditional culture, and the more the society develops towards the modern civilization, the less the traditional culture remains and the more new things are created. In modern society, people measure their activities more by real rationality. Similarly, since its birth, Ninigou has been closely connected with the evolution of the times and society, and its development has been inseparable from the development of the times. The different performances of Ninigou in different times are thoughts and reflections on society. It is precisely for this reason that Ninigou is honoured to be the recorder and reflector of social changes, providing revelations for social changes.

However, it should not be overlooked that both the Ninigou and the Tookata Sia-Kaban are fading away from us in this age. How they can continue to develop nowadays, or how can the younger generation remember the culture they carry, the author believes that they should be integrated into our life scenarios with richer forms of expression. In today's society, no matter whether it is China or Thailand, no matter it is Ninigou or Tookata Sia-Kaban, they are all out of touch with modern life, out of touch means losing the connection, losing the connection means not being able to carry on the inheritance and exchanges, and then it also means death, all the cultural styles and forms are spread and accepted by the people amid consumption. Analyzed from another perspective, that is, how to construct a mutual assistance model with the participation of multiple subjects, the author believes that the construction of such a mutual assistance model requires the active participation and unremitting efforts of the local government, Ninigou artists, cultural experts, relevant scholars, the media, as well

as all kinds of social organizations and individuals, to form mutual assistance from the inside to the outside, and from the top to the bottom of the formation of mutual assistance - the government's legal and institutional safeguards, as well as manpower and human resources. The government's legal and institutional safeguards as well as human and material financial support, the enthusiasm of the artists to participate in the national traditional culture and the emotional and cultural consciousness of the stimulation, experts, scholars, media and others play their respective advantages, publicity and appeal in the middle of the community at large, to cause the community at large to the modern reconstruction of the support and attention to the formation of synergy, to create a mutual assistance mode of participation of the pluralistic subjects, to stimulate its vigorous vitality.

In summary, the inheritance of traditional craft not only relies on its essence and the commonality inherent in human nature but also necessitates a foundation in the interplay between market demands and economic reciprocity. It involves a mutual permeation, transforming profound cultural implications into substantial economic benefits.

5.3 Suggestion

Firstly, researchers aiming to conduct comprehensive studies should engage in more extensive field surveys and cross-cultural analyses of traditional crafts worldwide. This approach will facilitate a deeper understanding of traditional crafts and their evolution in response to societal changes.

Secondly, the widespread appreciation of Ninigou and the Tookata Sia-Kaban tradition is deeply connected to individual experiences and acceptance. Embracing and valuing these cultural elements can significantly contribute to their preservation and future relevance.

Finally, although Ninigou is evolving, further innovations in its design, colour scheme, or a revolutionary approach to its decorative and entertainment features could lead to unforeseen impacts on cultural communication.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A Interview Questions

No.	Keywords	Question Details
1	Personal Background & Experience	<p>How did you begin learning to craft Huaiyang Ninigou?</p> <p>How was this craft passed down to you?</p> <p>How long have you been creating Huaiyang Ninigou?</p> <p>What does the crafting of Huaiyang Ninigou mean to you personally?</p>
2	Crafting Process & Skills	<p>What are the crucial steps in crafting a Huaiyang Ninigou?</p> <p>How do you choose and prepare the materials?</p> <p>How do you decide on the shape, colour, and decorations of the Huaiyang Ninigou?</p> <p>Over the past few decades, what changes have you noticed in the materials and techniques used in crafting Huaiyang Ninigou? How did these changes occur?</p>

- 3 Symbolic Significance & Cultural Tradition
- What symbolic or cultural meanings do Huaiyang Ninigou hold in your opinion?
- How would you explain the symbolic significance and cultural value of Huaiyang Ninigou to others?
- What role do you think the Huaiyang Ninigou play in the local community?
- Do you think the symbolic meanings of Huaiyang Ninigou in the community have changed from the past to the present? How did these changes occur?
- 4 Social Changes & Artistic Innovation
- In recent years, have there been changes in the craft techniques and artistic style of Huaiyang Ninigou? How did these changes happen? What impact have societal changes had on your craft and creativity?
- What is your perspective on the influence of new technology and media on traditional crafts?
- Have the recognition and importance given to traditional culture and folk art changed in today's society? How does Huaiyang Ninigou, as a form of traditional art, maintain its uniqueness and appeal in this environment?

5 Artistic Heritage &
Development

Are there any measures or activities to attract the younger generation to participate in and learn about the crafting of Huaiyang Ninigou?

Are the younger people interested in crafting Huaiyang Ninigou? What is their attitude towards traditional crafts?

How do you think the crafting skills of Huaiyang Ninigou should be protected and passed down?

What impacts do you think the current social environment has on the heritage and development of Huaiyang Ninigou?

What expectations or suggestions do you have for the future development of Huaiyang Ninigou?

Do you think it is possible to incorporate the production of Huaiyang Ninigou into the art education of local schools? What impact will this have on the inheritance and development of Huaiyang Ninigou?

Appendix B Transcript of Interview with Artist

Transcript of Interview with Ninigou Artist Shao Bo

Huaiyang, China 8/11/23

Author: What does Huaiyang Ninigou mean to you?

Shao Bo: I have been in contact with Huaiyang Ninigou since I was a child, for me, Huaiyang Ninigou is not only a craft, it is more like the honour of the family, the pride of Huaiyang, but also my respect and guardianship of traditional culture. The creation of Huaiyang Ninigou was nurtured by the Fuxi culture, which is connected with the folklore of the Central Plains and the common psychological and emotional demands of human beings.

Author: What is the process of making Huaiyang Ninigou? If you face students with no basic knowledge, how do you introduce the production steps?

Shao Bo: The first thing to do is to beat the mud: usually from the underground dug out of the wet rubber clay block, and then place it on the stone mill, with a large wooden stick over and over again pounding, and strive for uniformity, delicate, elasticity, like a good rolling out of the noodle block. Then spray water, let it slowly seep in; and then and mud, pounding mud, clay grinding is fine, how much water spray, the softness of the mud, and pounding is just right, are very important. If the clay particles are rough, they cannot be processed; if the clay is too soft, it is easy to shape but easy to deform; if the clay is too hard, it is not easy to pinch; if the number of times of pounding is not enough, the finished product will be easy to dry and crack. What seems to be simple on the surface is not easy to do, but contains several subtleties and skills.

The second step is to roll the blanks: roll the blanks by the size of the Huaiyang Ninigou to be done to determine the specifications, digging a piece of cement and good, the cement block into a shape and size of the finished product is similar to the blanks. The size of the Ninigou is determined by the feeling of the hand when making the blank.

The third step is moulding: small single Ninigou is made from moulds passed down from ancestors in the past, and now there are plaster moulds made of gypsum, which are lighter in weight and better than clay moulds. Put the kneaded blanks into the mould and press hard to make it even, smooth or slightly curved outside, and then pinch out a leg and a foot on the lower part of the Ninigou, which is also the support of the "Ninigou", to make the Ninigou stand up. Large, multi-headed Ninigou such as "cat pulling monkey", "two-headed dog", "multi-headed beast", or "pack turtles" The Ninigou, such as the "Cat Monkey", "Double-Headed Dog", "Multi-Headed Beast", "Pack Turtle Dove", "Nine-Headed Vulture", "Peach-holding Monkey", etc., are all handmade by artists. The main body shape is first pinched, and then each small, dependent on the main body of the form, into a mud mound, and then use small bamboo sticks of different sizes, to press the facial features or three-dimensional patterns on the body. After shaping the "Huaiyang Ninigou", to dry, that is, in the absence of direct sunlight to dry, if exposed to the sun will crack.

The fourth step is dyeing: the dyeing of the Ninigou is different from that of clay sculptures in other places. The black "black" used for dyeing clothes and the leather glue are put into a big pot and boiled with water a few times until the pigment is fully dissolved and then left to cool. Batches of clay moulds are then placed in a wire hedge, quickly dipped into the dyeing tank and quickly picked up; or the Ninigou is placed in a container and black dye is poured over them, and when the clay moulds have been dyed black, they are taken out one by one and left to dry.

Finally, the point of flowers: dyed black Huaiyang Ninigou thoroughly dry, the old craftsmen began to "point" flowers. The point flower tool is a farmer-planted sorghum stalk, the sorghum stalks cut into a slant, according to the size of the Huaiyang Ninigou is different, but to choose different thicknesses the sorghum stalks the pen, sorghum stalks of the core can absorb the colour, easy for artists to control the colour of the intensity of the "point" of different strokes of the thick and thin. "Point" flowers should pay attention to the control of the direction of the pen, strength and the number of colours on the pen, too little is drawn lines dry, rough, weak, and too much is not good to control the thickness of the pen.

Artists according to their habits and preferences, painted patterns of different types, some rigorous introverted, some stretching rounded. All of them are born out of a calm and full heart, and no matter how they paint, they have a sincere and simple feeling. But now the technology is also a little different from then, now the conditions are good, with the advertisement of colour (acrylic) is very economical, in the past artists made their own, some to make the mud Huaiyang Ninigou glossy, and so on after the colour dries, and then in the colour layer coated with a layer of egg white, play a role in protecting the colour, but also make the Huaiyang Ninigou looks bright and colourful. The brushes are also directly purchased, which makes it much easier to learn and use.

Author: What do you think about the symbolism of Huaiyang Ninigou and the traditional culture they carry as an inheritor?

Shao Bo: There are some common sayings about Huaiyang Ninigou, that is, "can cure diseases". So, from the mountains south and north of the visitors to the Huaiyang Ninigou to bring back to their hometowns, in addition to children and grandchildren and friends and relatives, but also some Huaiyang Ninigou thrown into the well, said to drink the water in the well, you can "clear the mind and eyesight, healing of all diseases".

Otherwise, why call it "spirit dog"? This comes from the "early mankind, for the deep and vast universe, the stars and the sky, the grass and trees of the earth, the cycle of the four seasons, interdependent beasts and animals, life, old age, sickness and death of life, the primitive forefathers are difficult to understand, they will be born out of the 'spirit of everything' concept that everything in the universe has some kind of mysterious attributes, or were manipulated by certain spirits and ghosts with wills, feelings and even rationality. Specifically, they believed that the weather, disasters, succession, and illnesses were the work of spirits and ghosts. The ancestors believed that by praying, pleasuring, sacrificing and appeasing them in a certain way, they could influence or change what happened in reality.

Author: With the changes in society, has Huaiyang Ninigou, as a handicraft, changed in terms of artistic innovation?

Shao Bo: Social changes have made me treasure this craft more, and at the same time try to combine modern elements to make it more contemporary.

New technologies and media have brought more opportunities for traditional handicrafts to be displayed and exchanged, as well as more creativity and inspiration.

Specifically, in the current society, as people pay more attention to cultural heritage, the status of Huaiyang Ninigou has become more solid, but at the same time, they need to be constantly innovated to adapt to modern aesthetics.

Society is developing, mankind is progressing, the integration of the visual art elements of Huaiyang Ninigou and the aesthetic appreciation habits of modern people, when doing new design, not only focuses on the inner implicit but also pays attention to the outer form, which is the way of modern design, but also the way of the development of Huaiyang Ninigou.

Because the Huaiyang Ninigou is made of mud, fragile, and inconvenient for tourists to carry, you can make the Huaiyang Ninigou modelling and today's materials for convergence, as well as changes to the production process, such as adding cotton to

the mud, while drawing on the porcelain firing process, made easy for tourists to carry the Huaiyang Ninigou with the characteristics of the modern design of the art. Another example can be made in Huaiyang Huaiyang Ninigou elements of other carriers of souvenirs, to promote Fuxi culture from multiple angles, so that more people come to travel, and even plastic, etc., to promote the tourism industry and folk art in Huaiyang.

Author: What do you think about the future heritage and development of Huaiyang Ninigou art?

Shao Bo: In general, it is a change in nature, from sacrificial objects to decorative objects.

With the progress and development of the times, the Huaiyang Ninigou has changed in the process of inheritance, we integrate the Huaiyang Ninigou with the social culture, and its appearance is changing with people's wishes. Nowadays, people would like to have a more realistic and utilitarian symbolism, such as "all things go well", "lucky star", "prosperity", "dragon and phoenix", "longevity", "peace and happiness" and so on. The local Huaiyang Ninigou artists in Huaiyang have even broken through the traditional mode and boldly innovated to seek a survival position for this primitive craft of Huaiyang Ninigou in modern society. There are some modern types of works, such as: dominating the first, immediately feudal lords, soaring to success, The Root of the Human Dragon, peace, send a Son to Send Blessings, tigers, tigers, and so on. In addition, there are some series of types such as the Olympic Fuwa series and the Twelve Chinese zodiac series.

Undoubtedly, these Huaiyang Ninigou models have revealed people's longing and expectation of a happy life, but also fully embody the desire of people to get from the Huaiyang Ninigou on their favourable aspects, to meet their own more children, more happiness, peace and happiness, more wealth and longevity of the heart desire. This also makes the weird shape of Huaiyang Ninigou no longer only a traditional

reproductive imagery, but a rich modern flavour of art decoration. The meaning of the shape is clear at a glance, and it is no longer a strange and puzzling image.

Similarly, we have set up workshops and training courses to attract young people to participate in learning. Many young people are curious about Huaiyang Ninigou, and they respect the tradition while wanting to incorporate their creativity.

The key to preserving and passing on the tradition is education and popularization so that more people understand its value while combining it with modern technology and art to make it more viable.

In my opinion, the current social environment pays more attention to cultural heritage and provides good conditions for the inheritance of Huaiyang Ninigou. I sincerely hope that in the future, the Huaiyang Ninigou will maintain its traditional charm while incorporating more modern elements to give them both a sense of history and a sense of the times.

As an inheritor, I am also actively involved in the extracurricular programmes of local schools to promote the story of Huaiyang Ninigou, which not only develops the students' handicraft skills but also strengthens their sense of identity with the local culture.

Transcript of Interview with Ninigou Artist Chen Jing

Huaiyang, China 8/11/23

Author: May I ask how you started learning to make Huaiyang Ninigou? How has this skill been passed down?

Chen Jing: I started to learn how to make Huaiyang Ninigou after I married my husband. After I got married, I was deeply attracted to this art and decided to learn to make Ninigou systematically. Art is passed down through the family, but with the development of the times, the way of passing it down is becoming diversified.

Author: How long have you been engaged in making Huaiyang Ninigou?

Chen Jing: I have been engaged in the production of Huaiyang Ninigou for nearly twenty-five years. I've gone through the process of doing odd jobs to being a female craftsman.

Author: In your opinion, what is the significance of Huaiyang Ninigou to you personally?

Chen Jing: For me, the Huaiyang Ninigou is not just a craft, but more like a spiritual support. It is my connection with my family and represents my identity, honour and responsibility. Every time I make a Ninigou, I can feel the connection with my predecessors, which is a kind of spiritual inheritance.

Author: In your opinion, what are the important steps in the process of making Huaiyang Ninigou?

Chen Jing: The first step is to choose and prepare the materials, and our local pure and fine-textured yellow clay is a very good raw material. Then it is to make the basic form, which is a great test of the artist's modelling ability, followed by meticulous carving

details, which is a test of patience and care, and finally colouring and finishing, which is different for each artist, and in general, each step requires absolute concentration and patience, as the saying goes, "the outsiders look at the scene, the insiders look at the doorway".

Author: How do you decide the shape, colour and decoration of the Ninigou?

Chen Jing: Usually the colours and decorations are mostly chosen based on traditional symbolism. Specifically, the colours are red, green, yellow and white, while the base colour is black, which is intrinsically related to the traditional Chinese five-colour barrier. However, I also often draw inspiration from life. Sometimes, for example, I am inspired by specific festivals, events or people's stories. And the colours and decorations are more based on my emotional expression of that particular situation or story.

Author: In your opinion, what are the special symbols or cultural meanings of Huaiyang Ninigou?

Chen Jing: Huaiyang Ninigou not only represent the culture and history of the Huaiyang region, but they are also a reflection of the relationship between man and man, man and nature. Each piece of work contains a small story, a mapping of local customs, habits and emotions. The image of the dog is an important modelling image of clay Ninigou, this image is not empty, but a legend related to Fuxi: Legend has it that in ancient times, Huaiyang was called Wanqiu country, the people lived a happy and rich life, which was coveted by foreign enemies, the soldiers violated the Wanqiu, the army pressed the city, the ministers, but there is no plan to withdraw the troops. The king was in a hurry and ordered that whoever could repel the enemy army, would betray his daughter to him.

At this time, a yellow dog floated in the Cai River and drove away the enemy army, the king had no choice but to betroth his daughter to the yellow dog. In the end, the yellow dog had to stay in the tank for some time before it could become a human being, but the

king's daughter was in a hurry and opened the tank early, resulting in the emergence of a man with the upper half of his body as a handsome man and the lower half of his body as a dog. According to the legend, this is the origin of Fuxi. Perhaps, the Ninigou and the creation of this legend have an inexplicable relationship.

Author: In recent years, Huaiyang Ninigou's production techniques and artistic style have not changed. How did these changes happen?

Chen Jing: With the development of the times, we do try some new techniques and artistic styles. For example, for the first time, I tried to use new types of colours and materials, as well as combine some themes from the Olympics. All in all, these changes are to adapt to the aesthetics and needs of modern society and also to keep this traditional art up to date, so that the Ninigou can develop in the new era.

Author: As a traditional art form, are there any measures or activities to attract the younger generation to participate and learn?

Chen Jing: We have set up workshops and training courses to provide free training to interested young people in the hope that more young people will understand and fall in love with this traditional art. At the same time, we have also implemented a flexible training system to maximise the convenience for those learning Ninigou.

At the same time, I think the key is to make more people understand and appreciate this art. Whether it is through workshops, exhibitions and educational activities, the community needs to understand its value, so that we can provide strong support for the inheritance and preservation of Huaiyang Ninigou.

Transcript of Interview with Ninigou Artists Xu Shuzhang
Huaiyang, China 10/11/23

Author: In today's social and cultural context, what is the role and significance of Ninigou?

Xu Shuzhang: Ninigou is not just a toy or decoration; it serves as a carrier of Huaiyang's history, culture, and tradition. In modern society, Ninigou represents respect for and inheritance of traditional culture, a tribute to ancient craftsmanship. Simultaneously, with the increasing emphasis on intangible cultural heritage, Ninigou has become a bridge between tradition and modernity, local and global.

Author: In the past, what changes has Ninigou undergone, and how did it evolve from a local feature to its current status?

Xu Shuzhang: The origin of Ninigou can be traced back to the time of Fuxi, reflecting the reproductive worship and other customs of that era. Over time, Ninigou experienced the blending of various arts and cultures, and its forms and styles became increasingly diverse. In the past, Ninigou was mainly sold at the Taihao Ling Temple Fair, but as awareness of its artistic value grew, it gradually stepped onto a larger stage. Modern activities such as exhibitions, exchanges, and training have elevated Ninigou from a local feature to a national-level intangible cultural heritage, renowned both domestically and internationally.

Author: For the new generation of creators, what are the new opportunities and challenges in the production of Ninigou?

Xu Shuzhang: The new generation of creators faces unprecedented opportunities. With technological advances, they can use modern tools and platforms for creation and promotion, enabling more people to understand and appreciate Ninigou. Meanwhile,

national support for intangible cultural heritage provides them with more opportunities for learning and exchange. However, challenges exist as well. The new generation must address questions such as how to innovate while inheriting tradition and how to maintain the purity of art amid commercialization.

Author: In the future, which direction do you think the inheritance and development of Ninigou art should take?

Xu Shuzhang: First and foremost, we must ensure the effective inheritance of the traditional skills of Ninigou, involving more young people in this industry. Secondly, continuous innovation is needed, combining modern art and technology to make Ninigou adaptable to the needs of modern society. Additionally, we need to strengthen communication and collaboration with domestic and international counterparts, allowing Ninigou art to go global and become a representative symbol of Chinese culture.

Author: In the face of modernization's impact, how can the traditional characteristics and artistic charm of Ninigou be preserved?

Xu Shuzhang: Faced with the impact of modernization, we must delve into the study and understanding of Ninigou's history and cultural connotations, ensuring that its traditional characteristics are not lost during the creative process. Simultaneously, organizing various exhibitions, lectures, and training activities can help more people understand the artistic charm of Ninigou. Moreover, attention should be paid to the integration with other art forms, exploring new creative spaces and finding an appropriate balance between tradition and modernity for Ninigou.

Transcript of Interview with Ninigou Artist Ren Guohe
Huaiyang, China 15/11/23

Author: Considering the evolving cultural landscape, how do you perceive the role and relevance of Ninigou today?

Ren Guohe: Ninigou, in its essence, is far more than an artistic object; it embodies the spirit and essence of Huaiyang's rich cultural heritage. In the current era, it stands as a testament to our commitment to preserving and honoring our ancestral traditions, making it a pivotal link between the past and present. The focus on intangible cultural heritage in recent times has further highlighted its significance, enabling Ninigou to act as a cultural ambassador, fostering a dialogue between diverse cultures and eras.

Author: Could you shed light on the transformative journey of Ninigou, from its origins to achieving its esteemed status in the cultural heritage domain?

Ren Guohe: Ninigou's journey is a reflection of cultural evolution, originating from ancient fertility rituals associated with Fuxi and evolving through centuries of artistic and cultural amalgamation. Historically, its presence was predominantly noted during the Taihao Temple Fair, where it was celebrated as a local craft. However, its transition into the limelight began as its cultural and artistic values were recognized, paving the way for its introduction to broader platforms through exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and educational initiatives. This journey from a regional craft to being acknowledged as a national treasure and an integral part of our intangible cultural heritage underscores its dynamic evolution and growing acclaim on both national and international stages.

Author: What prospects and hurdles do contemporary Ninigou artisans encounter in their creative endeavors?

Ren Guohe: Today's artisans are positioned at a crossroads of tradition and innovation, afforded by the digital age and global connectivity. This era offers unparalleled opportunities for the dissemination and appreciation of Ninigou through digital mediums, enhancing its reach and engagement. The backing from policies aimed at preserving intangible cultural heritage further enriches the ecosystem for artistic exchange and development. Nonetheless, the modern artisan must navigate the delicate balance between innovation and the sanctity of traditional craftsmanship, striving to retain the art form's authenticity amidst commercial pressures.

Author: Looking ahead, what direction should the preservation and evolution of Ninigou art take?

Ren Guohe: The path forward for Ninigou art is twofold: safeguarding the transmission of its ancient techniques to future generations while fostering innovation that resonates with contemporary sensibilities. It's crucial to engage the youth in this living tradition, ensuring its vitality and relevance. Marrying the art with modern aesthetics and technologies can open new avenues for its application and appreciation, thereby securing its place in both domestic and global cultural dialogues. Collaboration and exchange with international cultural entities can amplify its voice, positioning Ninigou as a global emblem of Chinese cultural heritage.

Author: In an age dominated by modernization, how can we ensure the preservation of Ninigou's traditional values and artistic integrity?

Ren Guohe: The challenge posed by modernization necessitates a deep, introspective engagement with Ninigou's historical and cultural essence. Preservation efforts must focus on educating both creators and the public about its symbolic meanings and artistic techniques, ensuring that its core attributes remain intact.

By organizing exhibitions, educational seminars, and interactive workshops, we can cultivate a deeper appreciation for Ninigou's unique charm. Integrating Ninigou with contemporary art forms while maintaining its traditional core offers a promising avenue for sustaining its relevance and ensuring its legacy endures through the ages.



Transcript of Interview with Staff of the NATIONAL MUSEUM in Bangkok

Bangkok, Thailand 8/9/23

Author: Hello, I am a Chinese student from Srinakharinwirot University researching crafts and social change, and I would like to ask you questions about Tookata Sia-Kaban. Firstly, could you briefly introduce what Tookata Sia-Kaban is and its place in Thai culture?

Staff: Hi, nice to meet you, Tookata Sia-Kaban is a type of clay doll made of clay that originated in Thailand during the Sukhothai period. It has an important place in Thai culture as an object of mystery and primitive superstition, used to banish misfortunes and dangers, as well as representing the beliefs and cultural values of the ancient Thai people.

Author: That sounds very interesting, the Tookata Sia-Kaban looks very symbolic, can you tell us about the process of making the Tookata Sia-Kaban? Can you tell us about the process of making the Tookata Sia-Kaban and what special techniques are used to make it?

Staff: Sure. Tookata Sia-Kaban is made with great care and patience. They are mainly made of locally produced clay, which is sometimes mixed with other materials, such as sand and more fire-resistant soil, to enhance their texture. Such materials enable Tookata Sia-Kaban to retain its colour after plating, become durable and unbreakable, and maintain a long-lasting vibrant appearance.

Author: Tookata Sia-Kaban's appearance and posture look very unique. Does each Tookata Sia-Kaban have different characteristics? What are the typical postures and uses?

Staff: Each Tookata Sia-Kaban is unique and can vary in appearance, posture, and use. Today, Tookata Sia-Kaban images often reflect the lifestyles and needs of different generations. Typically, the subject matter is both male and female, with a female Tookata Sia-Kaban presenting the image of a mother holding a child, who may be holding a fan, a child, or some other symbolic object in her hands. Male dolls, on the other hand, are usually presented in different poses such as topless, wearing cloth underneath, imitating betel nut smoking, or playing music.

Author: I noticed that this image of a mother and child is very vivid, as you mentioned earlier, how does it serve as an expulsion of misfortune and danger?

Staff: Tookata Sia-Kaban, also known as head-throwing dolls, were created in the past when Thais believed that ghosts enslaved people by taking their souls. When the soul was taken, the person died. Because of this belief, when a woman gave birth to her child, one would make a mother who would hold her child while then breaking its neck. This ritual is called Tookata Sia-Kaban and then the doll would be disposed of. This ritual is believed to trick the ghosts - the mother and her child are dead and the ghosts will not come back to haunt them.

Overall, in ancient times, these dolls were used to confuse the invoking ghosts or to defeat those who had harmed them through magical incantations. Sometimes the dolls might be pierced with needles to inflict damage, and the body parts of the dolls representing the enemy might be broken, which also represented damage to the enemy, sometimes resulting in pain or even death. Similarly, in ancient times, many issues remained unresolved, especially about the life and death of pregnant women, as problems during labour led to high mortality rates.

Childbirth requires a midwife, and an inadequate midwife could be a danger to both the mother and the child, resulting in both the mother and the child potentially being at risk for a variety of illnesses, leading to far more deaths than survivors, and the people of the

time mistakenly believed that ghosts were taking their lives, and therefore used this ritual to hold on to the peace of the mother and child.

Author: It was very interesting and I learnt more about Tookata Sia-Kaban.

Staff: Sometimes children are born with lovely faces, but there is a fear that ghosts may like these children and try to take them away. In ancient times, Thais would not praise a newborn child as "cute", but would describe the child's appearance with a different name in an attempt to keep the ghosts away. In ancient times, the royal family made dolls specifically to free newborns from ghosts, for example, they would scratch the doll's face with a knife to make it look more blemished and wrinkled, thus interfering with the ghosts. Or maybe it's an ancient trick. When someone was very sick in a house, they would use the doll to pay homage to the ghost, who took it away and the real patient would survive safely.

Specifically, ancient people believed that the causes of various illnesses were related to ghosts, so they made dolls to trick the ghosts, the dolls were usually an image of a mother holding a child. These dolls were used to make offerings to ghosts to threaten the ghosts not to harm the mother and child. Sometimes mats made of banana peels are added, and then these dolls are placed at three-way intersections, supposedly to protect the mother and child by confusing the ghosts or taking the life of the mother and child instead of the ghosts.

Author: I see, this explanation sounds ridiculous and even a bit absurd nowadays, but in ancient times, when illnesses were difficult to cure in a few days, people seemed to use this form to send good wishes. So is it possible for an adult to use such a form if he or she is afflicted by an illness?

Staff: Your question is an interesting one, and even Tookata Sia-Kaban is indeed made for adults who are experiencing strange symptoms, suspect they are under attack by witchcraft, have bad luck, or have other misfortunes. These dolls may be made to represent the sick person who lost or broke their neck in a ritual that communicates to the spirits that the victim is dead and there is no longer a need to take the patient's life. These rituals usually end when the doll loses its neck. In short, traditional Thai culture contains a deep belief system related to witchcraft or superstition, and Tookata Sia-Kaban is used to protect people from various dangers and misfortunes, such as disease invasions and ghostly harm.

Author: A very deep belief system. So, do the traditions of Tookata Sia-Kaban still exist in modern society? Do they continue to fulfil the same role?

Staff: Yes, the traditions of Tookata Sia-Kaban still exist despite many changes in modern society. In Thailand, ceremonies are still performed to help people avoid misfortune. These ceremonies are usually held at a three-way intersection, and at the end of the ceremony, the doll's head, arm or leg is broken, an ancient ritual designed to ward off misfortune. Although modern productions of Tookata Sia-Kaban may vary in form and appearance, they still carry the same beliefs and cultural values.

Author: Lastly, regarding the origin of the word "Tookata Sia-Kaban", can you explain what it means and how it relates to the production process? What are the tools used to make it?

Staff: The origin of the word "Tookata Sia-Kaban" is open to different opinions. Some historians believe that Tookata Sia-Kaban was not struck on the head, but was driven away in some way. This may have included cutting nails, cutting hair, and placing hair so that it did not touch the doll's head. Because touching the doll's head might anger the spirits as an act of aggression against them, the doll's head must first be destroyed.

This concept reflects the deep connection between the making of Tookata Sia-Kaban and its uses. To make Tookata Sia-Kaban, in addition to clay, you need a heater, paint, brushes, sponges, sticks, measuring tape, and other tools.

Author: Thank you very much for your detailed explanation, which gives us a deeper understanding of Tookata Sia-Kaban. Thank you again for your sharing today, it was very beneficial.

Staff: You're welcome, I'm glad to share this knowledge about Tookata Sia-Kaban, I hope this helps you in your research.



Transcript of Interview with the Staff of the AYUTTHAYA NATIONAL MUSEUM
CHAO SAM PRAYA
Ayutthaya,Thailand 12/9/23

Author: Hello, I am a Chinese student from Srinakharinwirot University researching crafts and social change, and I would like to ask you questions about Tookata Sia-Kaban. Firstly, could you briefly introduce what Tookata Sia-Kaban is and its place in Thai culture?

Staff: Sure! Tookata Sia-Kaban is a traditional Thai clay doll that is commonly used for supernatural beliefs and rituals. These dolls are made in various shapes and are meant to protect people from danger and misfortune. But we don't have Tookata Sia-Kaban exhibits in this gallery, more artefacts found during the excavation work and restoration of Ayutthaya's ancient temples, including Buddha statues, payback tablets, gold artefacts and other treasures recovered from the tombs of several temples. But I can share with you some information about it.

Author: Thank you very much, I would like to know what is the history and origin of Tookata Sia-Kaban.

Staff: The history of Tookata Sia-Kaban goes back to ancient times and became popular around the Sukhothai period. Associated with death and ghosts, it was believed that these dolls could be used to confuse evil spirits and protect loved ones from all kinds of death or all kinds of threats. This tradition is deeply rooted in Thai culture and seems to be associated with witchcraft and superstition, or perhaps a belief. In other words, the dolls are meant to represent the possibility of misfortune to people, and by transferring it to the dolls, as a way to protect people from danger. These beliefs arose at a time when medicine was not sufficiently developed and had a special significance in ancient times.

Author: What is the process of making Tookata Sia-Kaban?

Staff: Making a Tookata Sia-Kaban involves the use of clay with other materials and is usually handmade, with the artist carefully carving and moulding them to give them a unique appearance. Once finished, their heads are usually cut off or removed, which is why they are called "headless dolls".

Author: What rituals and traditions are associated with Tookata Sia-Kaban in Thai culture?

Staff: Tookata Sia-Kaban is usually used in special ceremonies and is placed at a crossroads or other places for worship. It may be damaged by trampling by animals (e.g., cows, buffalo, etc.). This dedication is mandatory and ceremonies will also place water lamps, banana peels, flowers, incense, candles and savoury items.

Author: Do Tookata Sia-Kaban traditions still exist in modern society?

Staff: Yes, the Tookata Sia-Kaban tradition exists in Thailand, but the people who know about it are dwindling. Although it may no longer be thought that people get sick because they are haunted by ghosts or because they are under a spell, as it was before, some people still believe in the magical powers of Tookata Sia-Kaban and use them on specific occasions. The tradition still has an important place in some celebrations and rituals and is believed to protect them from danger and misfortune.

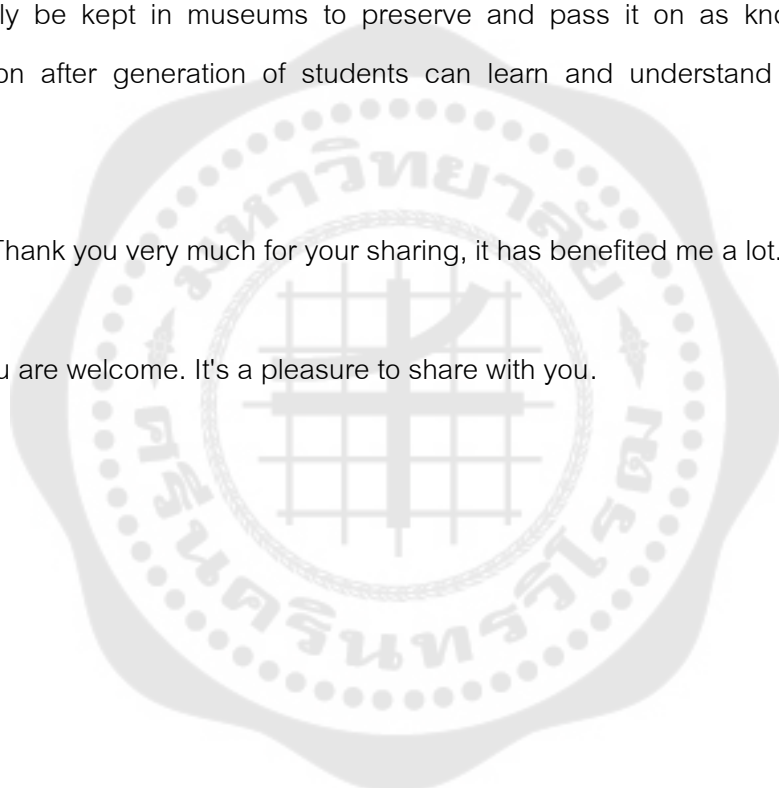
Author: Does Tookata Sia-Kaban have a similar tradition outside of Thailand?

Staff: Yes, similar traditions of Tookata Sia-Kaban exist in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia. These traditions are usually associated with superstitions and

supernatural beliefs that by allowing dolls to be harmed, misfortunes can be avoided for humans. A doll with its head cut off, made of glazed terracotta and dating back to around 1500-1800 AD, has also been found in Vietnamese culture and is currently on display in the National Museum in Hanoi. Overall, the Thai people have practised these beliefs since ancient times. Nowadays beliefs about Tookata Sia-Kaban seem to be changing and people are starting and accept new cultures. As a result, new beliefs may arise. For example, the superstitions of the past may have disappeared somewhat. But it will surely be kept in museums to preserve and pass it on as knowledge. So that generation after generation of students can learn and understand the stories from history.

Author: Thank you very much for your sharing, it has benefited me a lot.

Staff: You are welcome. It's a pleasure to share with you.





VITA

NAME YANG LI

PLACE OF BIRTH CHINA

INSTITUTIONS ATTENDED CHINA, Dalian Polytechnic University(Visual Communication Design)

