

Du-Dous in Taiwan

- A comparative study of Fukien, Hakka, and Taiwan Aboriginal Du-Dous-

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Abstract

Du-Dou was one of the Chinese costumes worn mostly by women and children. It is the equivalence of modern brassieres or under wear. While small in size, du-dous were popularly worn by many ethnic groups and in many regions in China. The embroidery on du-dous has attracted major attention recently, due to its functional and artistic aspects. The design, floral pattern, stitching technique, and color combination and distribution clearly demonstrate the practice of Chinese folk art and reflect the essence of Chinese life style.

Among the three major ethnic groups of Taiwan—the Fukiens, Hakkas, and Taiwan aboriginals, each group has its distinctive du-dou. The purpose of this study is to investigate and compare the similarities and differences of the embroidery on du-dou among the three ethnic groups in Taiwan, and furthermore, to make recommendations for the modern du-dous in the fashion industry.

Introduction

Colors, fabrics, designs, and accessories of a costume are the important components to bring out the essence of traditional Chinese costumes. Figures, symbols, patterns, and their combinations and distributions on a costume are the keys to understand the general belief and living philosophy of Chinese culture. One of the best examples is the "bat" design, which pronounces the same as the "luck" character—"fu". The bat pattern on a costume represents the wish of many lucks. These traditional Chinese costumes require skillful tailoring, stitching, and embroidering, which can not be made and replaced by the automatic machines. The cultural legacy of du-dous can easily be lost and discontinued if we do not make efforts to preserve the techniques and re-vitalize the folk art.

One of the major goals of this study is to analyze the characteristics of the traditional du-dou to provide a foundation in inspiring new designs and creating new lines of fashion trend.

Materials and methods

This study composed of samples of Fukien, Hakka, and Taiwan aboriginal du-dous from the "Li-Jiuan Wu Du-dou Collection". We examined the colors, embroidered patterns, designs, stitching techniques, and tactile sensation of the du-dous. The investigation also include literature review,

oral history records, and photographic collections in the Taiwan history museum.

Data were analyzed using the SPSS, EXCEL commercial statistical programs. We also list some guidelines for the future design of modern do-dous based on the results.

Results and Discussion

1. Du-dou color analysis

Table I demonstrates that the color counts on du-dous are between 4 to 7 colors. The color difference in Fukien du-dous is mainly among BK1.0, V19, 1tgy7.5, b24, dp18; in Hakkas, BK1.0, dp18, V19, b14; and in Taiwan aboriginals, dp18, BK1.0, V19.

2. Du-dou pattern analysis

Table 2 illustrates the major patterns of the Fukiens are plants and birds. The Hakkas prefer plants, birds, and non-living objects. The Taiwan aboriginals prefer plants and insects.

3. Du-dou fabric analysis

Table 3 reveals that du-dous of all three ethnic groups used natural fabrics. And cotton was the top choice. Cotton cloth, soft and highly absorbent, is one of the best candidates for under wear.

4. Du-dou tactile sensation analysis

Table 4 demonstrates that the degree of tactile sensation of du-dous in smoothness is between the middle and high scores which are scaled in five levels of very high, high, middle, low, and very low. The Fukien and Hakka du-dous are commonly recognized as very smooth in tactile sensation subjectively.

5. Du-dou stitching technique analysis

Table 5 summarizes the most often used stitching methods in each ethnic group. The Fukiens apply mostly back stitch, net stitch, outline stitch, long and short stitch, and couching stitch methods to their du-dous. The Hakkas use mostly back stitch, chain stitch and threaded stitch to their du-dous. And the Taiwan aboriginal prefer mostly color cord stitch, overhanging stitch, long and short stitch, and blanket stitch to their du-dous.

Conclusion

There is a distinctive difference in the choice of the color, pattern, and stitching technique as well as the subjective tactile sensation on du-dous among the Fukien, Hakka, and Taiwan aboriginal ethnic groups in Taiwan. However, there is a similarity in the choice of fabric for

du-dou in all groups, which cotton cloth is the primary and top choice.

Table 1 Color contents on Du-dou

Color contents		1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ethnic group	Fukien	2	1.4	3	2.1	8	5.5	6	4.1	26	17.9	37	25.5	18	12.4	3	2.1	103	71.0
	Hakka	0	0	5	3.4	4	2.8	8	5.5	5	3.4	2	1.4	2	1.4	1	0.7	27	18.6
	Aboriginal	0	0	3	2.1	2	1.4	3	2.1	5	3.4	1	0.7	1	0.7	0	0	15	0.3
Total		2	1.4	11	7.6	14	9.7	17	11.7	36	24.8	40	14.5	21	14.5	4	2.8	145	100.0

Table 2 Pattern and symbol on Du-dou

Pattern Symbol		Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Fishes	Insects	Plants	Non-living Objects	Continuous Patterns	Charac-ters	Others	Total
Ethnic group	Fukien											106
	N	3	48	6	4	20	85	2	2	3	14	74.1%
	Hakka											26
N	5	15	5	4	6	24	13	6	2	2		18.2%
Aboriginal												11
	N	1	4	1	0	5	8	1	3	1	0	7.7%
Total	N	9	67	12	8	31	117	16	11	6	16	143
	%	6.3	46.9	8.4	5.6	21.7	81.8	11.2	7.7	4.2	11.2	100.0

Table 3 Fabric of Du-dou

		Ethnic group			Total	
		Fukien	Hakka	Aboriginal		
Fabric	Cotton	N	71	19	13	103
		%	49.0	13.1	9.0	71.0
	Linen	N	22	0	2	24
		%	15.2	0	1.4	16.6
	Silk	N	10	8	0	18
		%	6.9	5.5	0	12.4
Total	N	103	27	15	145	
	%	71.0	18.6	10.3	100.0	

Table 4 Subjective evaluation of the tactile sensation of Du-dou

		Smoothness								Total			
		Very high		High		Middle		Low				Very Low	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Ethnic group	Fukien	6	4.1	25	17.2	63	43.4	9	6.2	0	0	103	71.0
	Hakka	9	6.2	11	7.6	7	4.8	0	0	0	0	27	18.6
	aboriginal	0	0	3	2.1	11	7.6	0	0	1	0.7	15	10.3
Total		15	10.3	29	26.9	81	55.9	9	6.2	1	0.7	145	100

Table 5 Du-dou stitching technique analysis

Stitch		Threaded running	Spoke	Overhanging	Longand short	Couching	Bullion knot	Chain	Outline	
Ethnic group	Fukien	N	12							
	Hakka	N	14							
	Aboriginal	N	3							
Total		N	29							
		%	20.0							
Stitch		Outline	Color cord	Satin	Broken chain	Blanket	Net	Arrowhead	Cross	
Ethnic group	Fukien	N	5	0	2	2	69	1	0	0
	Hakka	N	0	1	0	2	4	0	0	1
	Aboriginal	N	1	8	1	1	5	0	1	0
Total		N	6	9	3	5	78	1	1	1
		%	4.1	6.2	2.1	3.4	53.8	0.7	0.7	0.7
Stich		Back	Double herringbone		Prick	Total				
Ethnic group	Fukien	N	72	2	17	103				
	Hakka	N	15	0	2	27				
	Aboriginal	N	4	0	0	15				
Total		N	91	2	19	145				
		%	62.8	1.4	13.1	100.3%				