

# The application and Heritage of Copper Drum Culture in Nanning Primary School Art Classroom

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## ABSTRACT

Copper drums have been baptized by thousands of years of wind and rain, and festival activities related to copper drums are still active in some regions of China, so it is of practical significance to study the inheritance and innovation of copper drum art. The heritage needs to start from children, and elementary school teachers need to let children receive the culture of copper drums from an early age and feel the important role of copper drums in national festival activities in order to better inherit the culture of copper drums and promote the wide circulation of traditional cultural symbols in Guangxi region. This study takes the art curriculum resources of Nanhu Elementary School as an entry point, explains from the perspective of developing regional folk art curriculum resources according to local conditions, and further considers how to transform the copper drum cultural resources into art curriculum resources by analyzing excellent cases of local school-based curriculum development and utilization, deepening students' sense of identification with their native art and making them consciously take up the mission of cultural inheritance and promotion.

**Keywords-** Zhuang copper drum; elementary school art classroom; application; heritage

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nanning is located in South China and the south of Guangxi Province. It is the intersection of South China, Southwest China and Southeast Asia economic circle, the political, cultural and educational center of Guangxi, the intersection of Pan-Beibu Gulf Economic Cooperation, Greater Mekong Sub-regional Cooperation, Pan-Pearl River Delta Cooperation and other regional cooperation, as well as the permanent venue of China-ASEAN Expo and the national "Belt and Road". It is also the permanent venue of China-ASEAN Expo and an important gateway city for the "One Belt, One Road". Nanning is an ancient cultural city with a long history and is also a modern, international city with a multi-ethnic population dominated by Zhuang (Wu, 2011).

Copper drums are an ancient Chinese percussion instrument with a history of more than 2,700 years, with

the largest number and the widest distribution in Guangxi. The Zhuang copper drum custom, a folk custom of Hechi City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, is one of the national intangible cultural heritage list. Zhuang copper drum practice is a series of folk behaviors related to copper drum worship beliefs, such as beating and using copper drums, collecting copper drums and casting copper drums by Zhuang people. The Zhuang copper drum practice is mainly centered in the Hongshui River basin and is mainly distributed in the Zhuang-inhabited areas of Donglan County, Tian'e County, Nandan County, Bama County, Fengshan County, Dahua County, Hechi City, Guangxi, and Tianlin County, Longlin County, Xilin County, Baise City, Guangxi (Qin, 2010). In 2009, the Zhuang copper drum practice was listed as a recommended project for the Ministry of Culture to nominate to the United Nations Representative List of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (He,

2018). The multiple folk art charms of the Qujing Zhuang folk dance developed in this form became an important "intangible cultural heritage" in China and was once promoted and protected; however, with the impact of globalization and the globalization of Chinese folk dance, Chinese folk dance was greatly affected, and the Zhuang folk dance folk dance with regional characteristics once lost its unique artistic characteristics. Therefore, strengthening the folk dance of the Zhuang region is an inheritance and promotion of the local ethnic cultural heritage (Li, 2020). This article takes the pattern of copper drums in art education as an entry point to explore the use of pattern patterns and shapes of copper drums in elementary school art education in teaching reform.

## II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

China has a long history and deep cultural heritage, with a wide variety of ethnic cultures and ethnic crafts and rich and colorful contents. At present, the state attaches great importance to the inheritance of excellent traditional culture, focusing on guiding people to protect and inherit ethnic crafts and pay attention to folklore activities of ethnic traditional festivals, etc. (Liao, 2020). Fully tapping the artistic and cultural values in regional folk art curriculum resources has become an important issue that cannot be ignored in art education today.

The Ministry of Education and related departments have called on educational units at all levels to pay attention to the inheritance of ethnic art education and infiltrate traditional ethnic art into the art curriculum, and have received certain results (Wei, 2019). This study used the documentation method. Through the development and inheritance of the Zhuang copper drum dance, more people can understand the Zhuang copper drum dance. To explore how to protect and inherit the copper drum dance culture for its better development.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The copper drum dance is one of the important heritage of the ancient culture of Zhuang people. It is a rhythmic beating of drums by drummers and the rhythm of the drums drives the movements and form changes of the dancers. According to archaeological findings, copper drums appeared in dance scenes as early as the fourth century AD (late Spring and Autumn period) (Zhang, 2014). During festivals, people came from all over the world to gather and dance the copper drum dance to exchange emotions, enhance mutual understanding, and strengthen mutual communication. The copper drum dance is one of the important heritage of ancient Chinese culture. During major festivals such as "Spring Festival", "March 3 Flower Street Festival" and "Liulang Festival", the Zhuang people will hold a grand copper drum event. When the copper drums are beaten, villagers will

put on their festive costumes and sing and dance in the collective activity place. The festival day is rich in content. People beat copper drums and dance during the festival or in their leisure time to express their love for life and the joy of harvest (Wei, 2019).

The movements of the Zhuang copper drum dance are simple and generous, rich in content and unique in dance style. It is believed that the copper drum dance can stimulate the body and mind, enhance feelings and promote national unity, and is one of the important spiritual pillars of national unity. It is also one of the important factors for the better inheritance and development of the copper drum dance (Zheng, 2020). Accompanied by music, it reflects the creativity and ingenuity of the Zhuang people. As an important vehicle for studying the social history of the Zhuang and inheriting the traditional culture of the nation, it has the historical and cultural connotation of maintaining the Zhuang. It reflects the psychological and aesthetic interests of the Zhuang people from different angles and to different degrees (Ji, 2018). It reflects the spirited and simple character of the Zhuang people and expresses their enthusiastic and happy thoughts and feelings. It also expresses the spirit of national unity and progress. It reflects the creative talents and ingenuity of the Zhuang people, as well as the Zhuang people's hardworking, simple and kind character and aesthetic concepts (Liang, 2019).

The copper drum is one of the important heritages of the ancient Zhuang culture, which has been deeply rooted in the soil of the Zhuang and is closely related to the life of the Zhuang people. As an important medium for studying the social history of the Zhuang and inheriting the traditional culture of the nation, the copper drum has historical and cultural connotations of maintaining the survival and development of the nation, as well as functions of fitness and entertainment, enhancing national cohesion, and promoting national culture and performance (Lai, 2020). In order for Zhuang people to bring their artistic characteristics and charms into play, the copper drums can go higher and farther. Integrating Zhuang copper drums purposefully into elementary school art classroom teaching helps to keep the ethnic culture alive.

## IV. DISCUSSION

### *Copper drum pattern*

The copper drum is one of the most representative objects created by the ancient Pu people and the ancient Luo Yue people in China, and is a symbol of power and wealth. copper drums are the "living fossils" and encyclopedias that have survived in the long history. The drums are classified by shape and decoration, and different types of copper drums have different styles of ornamentation. The various decorations on the drums are

familiar to the ancient Luo Yue people. copper drums have high research value in folklore, anthropology, and art (Wei, 2019). Effectively developing and utilizing regional folk art resources and transforming their aesthetic, cultural, and educational values into basic education curriculum contents through screening and

integration can, to a certain extent, enhance students' understanding of folk art in the region, not only make them realize the value of folk art in the region and arouse students' national pride, but also have great significance for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage (Zhang, 2014).



Figure 1: Copper drum (picture from the Internet)

The copper drum (Figure 1) motif pattern has a simple and general shape, and the animal shape is similar to the shape of young children's drawings, which is on the geometric side (Liu, 2020). In the aesthetic education of the art classroom, in order for children to understand and use the copper drum motif, the copper drum motif pattern can be drawn as a decorative painting, or the copper drum motif pattern can be made into a basic pattern design. At the same time, the integration of pattern symbols in daily teaching activities allows children to recognize traditional cultural symbols and learn ethnic folk stories from them,

and understand the habits and preferences of ancient people (Yao, 2018).

The copper drum pictorial decoration expresses their life scenes on the one hand, and their unique aesthetic sense on the other, which is rich in romance. The decorative patterns of copper drums include sun patterns, cloud and thunder patterns, feathered man patterns, athletic patterns, rowing boat patterns, swimming flag patterns, soaring vulture patterns, geometric patterns, etc. (Li, 2020).



Figure 2: Copper drum sunburst (image from the Internet)



The sunburst (Figure 2) is one of the most common drum centerpieces on copper drums. The sunburst glows like a long sharp angle and is as slender as

a needle, expressing the people's reverence for the sun and their admiration for the center of power.

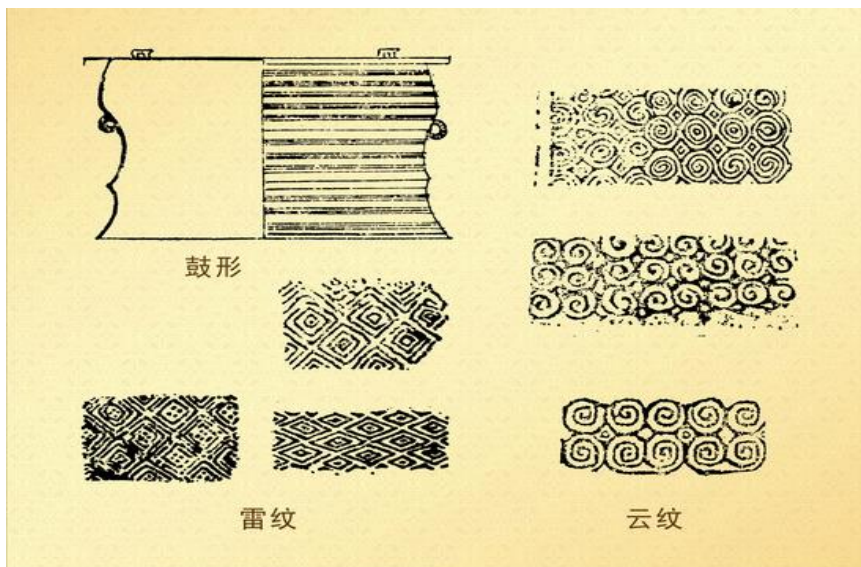


Figure 3: Copper drum with clouds and thunder pattern (picture from the Internet)

The cloud and thunder pattern (Figure 3) is also one of the symbols of the copper drum pattern. The cloud and thunder pattern reflects the worship of the ancestors to the celestial symbols and adds many mysterious colors

to the copper drums, reflecting their dignified and solemn aura. The feathered man motif presents the scene of a sorcerer overcoming a demon or monster and benefiting mankind.



Figure 4: Copper drum frog pattern (image from the Internet)

The frogs (Fig. 4) are one of the most characteristic decorations and are carved in three-dimensional relief, with a common number of eight. Some of these frogs are facing the center of the drum, some are facing the center of the drum, and some are rotating in one

direction. The most interesting is the stacked frog, also known as the crouching frog (large frog squatting on the back of a small frog, some as many as three or four layers).

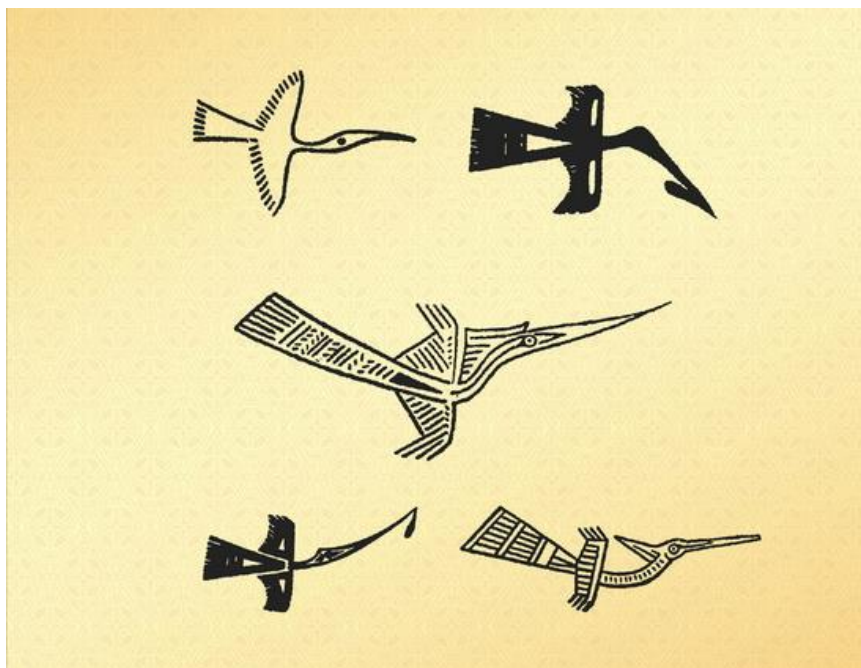


Figure 5: Copper drum with heron pattern (Photo from the internet)

The bird in the heron pattern (Figure 5) has a huge crown of feathers on its head, and the whole is in a flying posture. The copper drum pattern pattern is often a multi-layered, multi-dimensional composition combining one or several groups of object patterns and life scenes.

#### **Art Classroom Teaching**

Teachers should use play and teaching aids rich in ethnic culture and ethnic characteristics in their

teaching, and pass on the traditional copper drum motif patterns in a subtle way (Pan, 2018). In order to better integrate the copper drum motif pattern into elementary school art education, traditional copper drum motif patterns can also be used in the production of handicrafts, especially children's play and teaching aids for elementary school art courses, such as paper plate embroidery balls, paper umbrella paintings, and puzzles.



Figure 6: Students making paper plate embroidery balls





**Figure 7: Paper plate embroidery ball**

The paper plate embroidery ball (Fig. 7) is made by drawing the pattern of the copper drum symbol in a disposable paper plate with marker, either monochrome or colorful. 3 or 12 paper plates are assembled into the

shape of an embroidery ball, which can be made into a single rattle, or threaded with a string, like a string of lanterns, or decorated at the bottom with a thin string as a hanging beard.



**Figure 8: The author is teaching students to make copper drum pottery sculptures**

Copper drum pattern engraving (Figure 8) combines the art of pottery and seal carving, using a carving knife to engrave the copper drum pattern directly on the clay plate using the "Yin" or "Yang" method of carving. If the clay plate is used for decoration, you can

choose to fill the clay plate with color powder, use bright color patterns such as red, yellow, blue, green, etc., and use symbolic patterns to carve unique pottery carvings with festivals or themes.



Figure 9: Students are making colorful clay copper drums



Figure 10: Copper drum in colored clay

Children's playthings are mostly purchased, etc., and lack puzzles rich in national cultural symbols (Li, Tan & Zhang, 2021). To this end, teachers can first connect the bottoms of two pots of the same size together with

wire, then measure the diameter of the pots' mouths and cut out foam boards of the same size to paste to cover the mouths of the pots. Use black light clay to make the drum skin of the brass drum and paste it to cover the drum.

According to the design of the drum, make the decoration and pattern around the drum. Color the drum with gold acrylic paint and the paint mix. The colorful clay copper drums (Figure 10) guide children to identify and understand the connotation of the drum patterns and learn about Guangxi ethnic cultural symbols and their meanings.

## V. CONCLUSION

The existence of national culture enhances and boosts national identity and pride (Zhang, 2019). Although some elements fade or disappear in the course of history, their folkloric characteristics and cultural elements, as well as the human psychological factors that lead people's psychology, are still preserved and inherited. The development of curriculum resources with regional characteristics enriches the teaching content and injects new vitality into the curriculum reform (Tang, 2021). The imaginative shapes, decorative colors, and full-bodied compositions embedded in the copper drum patterns have important artistic value. Educators at Nanhu Primary School have conducted an in-depth analysis of the development and utilization of local school-based curriculum resources, combining in-school and out-of-school resources so that folk art resources can be widely used in art teaching, and through research, teachers have been able to pay more attention to folk art curriculum resources that are close to life and to students.

Through the relationship between ethnic art resources and primary art education, this paper discusses that from the ethnic art resources of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the selection of local outstanding, ethnic culture in line with the students' learning conditions into primary art teaching, in the teaching process and the organic integration of ethnic curriculum, for the local ethnic culture is a responsibility of inheritance education, the formation of sustainable development (Lai, 2019). With the gradual deepening of future research, the development of curriculum resources can try to broaden to the whole Guangxi, such as Nixing pottery, Guihai monument forest, Zhuang brocade, and Smoky Li River, all of which can be transformed into the teaching content of the art curriculum to deepen students' sense of identification with the local culture and art of their hometown, so that they can consciously shoulder the honorable mission of inheriting and promoting the traditional national culture and art.

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