

Chang, Hsien-Pien as an Autodidact in the Art and Crafts of Bamboo

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Abstract:

The study has participated in “Campus Resident Artists of Traditional Art Program,” and has followed the traditional artist Chang, Hsien-Pien to learn the art and crafts of bamboo. Through deeply understanding, it found out that Chang, Hsien-Pien has become an art master of bamboo by Autodidacticism. In traditional concept, establishing the craft-apprenticeship is the way of talent cultivation, technique heritage and educational training. There are certainly some values and significance of a master’s self-learning process.

Under the environment of multi-learning, it has discussed and constructed the mode of autodidacticism, and it believes the results will be helpful to the people who work in the design education area. The study has interviewed the artist Chang, Hsien-Pien firstly, and it analyzed the case by grounded theory as research basis. The autodidacticism mode of Chang, Hsien-Pien began at groundwork settling. His growing process has met the procedure of grounding and continued developing. It applied the rule of triangulation by its multi-viewpoints and theories to interpret the collected data, and found similar or different viewpoints from the subject by comparative analysis to testify and compare their relationships between each other.

The purposes of the study are:

1. The motivation of autodidacticism.
2. Necessary conditions of oneself who wants to be an autodidact.
3. To build up the mode of autodidacticism.

Key words: *Craft-apprenticeship, Autodidacticism, Grounded Theory, Triangulation, Traditional Artist*

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

The study has participated in “Campus Resident Artists of Traditional Art Program” of National Center of Traditional Art in Yilan, and has followed the traditional artist Chang, Hsien-Pien to learn the art and crafts of bamboo. Through deeply understanding, it found out that Chang, Hsien-Pien has become an art master of bamboo by Autodidacticism. In traditional concept, establishing the craft-apprenticeship is the way of talent cultivation, technique heritage and educational training. There are certainly some values and significance of a master’s self-

learning process.

Under the environment of multi-learning, each way of learning is no longer limited to the mentoring education of schools or systems. An autodidact need to understand the ability of self learning and the capability of solving problems. Through this are discussed and constructed the mode of autodidacticism, and the belief that the results will be helpful to the people who work in the design education area.

1.2 The Main Purpose of the Study is to discuss:

1. The motivation of autodidacticism.
2. The necessary conditions of oneself who wants to be an autodidact.
3. Building up the mode of autodidacticism.

1.3 Research Scope and Limitation

The study has aimed at the case of Chang, Hsien-Pien. It attempts to understand his personal characteristics and the direct or indirect influenceable elements from his growing surroundings that effect his creations. It would be able to realize Chang, Hsien-Pien's creation style and features from the works. His works has included the collections in the National Palace Museum and National Center of Traditional Art in Yilan.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1 Interview and Data Collating

Chang, Hsien-Pien's grandfather was a *Cyperus malaccensis* weaving artist, but he (Chang) had not participated in weaving. He has known the transformation of warp and weft weaving since he was young. After he followed his father who worked in the textile industry to take the mats that produced from his family as the main material to develop to new items. In 1970, his father had a request from his Japanese friend. He would like to find a factor to be an original equipment manufacturer of vine and bamboo lamps. Despite limited outcomes, through financial and manufacturing help they had begun to produce weaving production instead of only bamboo craft.

Split bamboo is the basic material of bamboo craft. In order to save the time of bamboo-splitting and the needs of demand, Chang, Hsien-Pien's started to research and develop to improve and convert the incense machinery into bamboo-splitting machinery. He was the first person to use machinery to replace bamboo-splitting by hand in bamboo craft filed.

Chang, Hsien-Pien's learning path of the art and craft of bamboo processes as leap and collage. He imitates from existing products, observes from traditional utensils, and learns from daily necessities. He learnt from his mistakes. Due to traditional artists treasuring their techniques, they do not pass down their skill to people who are not their student. That is why Chang, Hsien-Pien was reluctant to be taught. Autodidacts need to face all problems by themselves, and it does take times to find out solutions. During the interview, Chang, Hsien-Pien has stated that art works need to spend time to create, and he also reviews his creations which are full of the original features of bamboo.

In 1978, due to the recommendation of the Taiwan Handicraft Promotion Center (Now called National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute), Chang, Hsien-Pien competed with several craft artist. He won

the opportunity to have mass production of a thin bamboo vase by a Japanese fine art dealer. Chang, and then has pushed himself to delicate thin bamboo craft. But Chang, Hsien-Pien thought he could not take craft artist as a career to make a living in Taiwan. There are difficulties to have mass production while combining creativity and craft (the reason is there is only one producer- the artist himself). As the economic center has changed in Taiwan, the plastic industry has become the main export product over bamboo. Therefore, it transforms into the way of creation. The following three years, Chang, Hsien-Pien won the award of handicraft industry’s best prize. In 1990, He acquired the national confirmation from the Ministry of Education of “Folk Art” in Heritage Award.

2.2 、Taiwanese Craft-apprenticeship Forming

The Analects of Confucius has stated “a teacher, one who could propagate the doctrine, impart professional knowledge, and resolve doubts”. The traditional system of mentoring relationship is also the origin of official operation mode. The role of teacher is to take over the responsibility to pass down professional knowledge, technique, personality and training the students. It is so called mentoring relationship. To bring in and apply the system of mentoring relationship has been emphasized in practice in recent years.

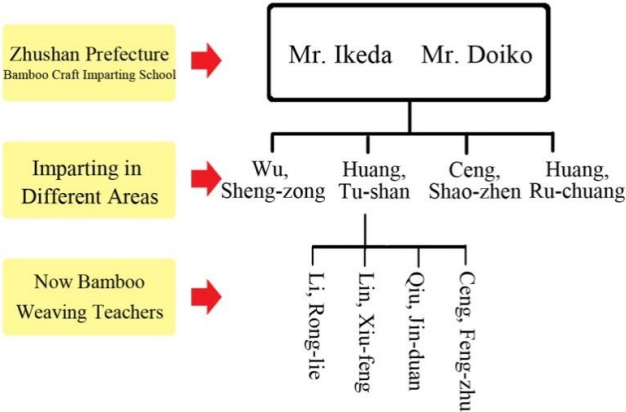
2.2.1 The Training Institution in Japanese Colonial Era

During the Japanese colonial era in 1938, there was officially founded the first Bamboo Craft Imparting School in Zhushan Prefecture. Japanese teachers, Mr. Ikeda and Mr. Doiko, taught the making of flower basket and suitcase. The founded purpose of the Bamboo Craft Imparting School in Zhushan Prefecture was aimed to pass down the bamboo weaving technique and promote the bamboo industry in Zhushan area. But due to the war, Japanese teachers left Taiwan. The course of the school was changed from a three-year system to a two-year system, and taught only bamboo weaving. Afterward, it closed due to financial issues.

2.2.2 The Training Institution after the Retrocession

After the retrocession of Taiwan, the government founded the Taiwan Handicraft Promotion Center and held classes around Taiwan. At that time, former students from the Bamboo Craft Imparting School became the teachers of bamboo and vine weaving classes.

For example, Huang, Tu-shan had been to Guanmiao and Jiayi to teach bamboo weaving technique, Ceng, Shao-zhen had been to Lugang, and Huang, Ru-chuang had been to Hualien to teach. All of these students had strongly influenced and promoted the bamboo craft and art industry after the retrocession and the development of the industry. Take Mr. Huang, Tu-shan as example, he has inherited from the Japanese teachers Mr. Ikeda and Mr. Doiko then to pass down to Li, Rong-lie and other people.



Talble of mentoring relationship from Huang, Tu-shan’s Case

The establishment of mentoring relationship is not only for channeling of talent cultivation, technique heritage and educational training, but to satisfy the contract in labor's heart and a path to build up their career development (Wu, Mei-lian, Wen, Shu-Lian and Lu, Chun-chun, 2009). The mentoring relationship of Huang, Tushan is still working and keeping teaching bamboo art and craft or bamboo art creation to extend the system of mentoring relationship and technique inheritance.

2.3 、 The Discussion of Autodidacticism

The autodidacticism means “Self-Study” or “Study independently”. The main concept is the student finding out his needs of learning and deciding the learning object. Then he ensures the learning materials, chooses and operates the proper learning strategy, and finally evaluates the results of learning and handles the process without any assistance (Skager, 1978; Smith & Handelsman, 1982; Rogers, 1983; Spear & Mocke, 1984; Belanger & Gelpi, 1995). Chang, Hsien-Pien depended on his knowledge of *Cyperus malaccensis* texture and approached bamboo art and craft by the opportunity of mass production. He has combined the vine craft and art in local tribe to create a new style of weaving and knotting technique. He has also imitated the producing process of traditional manufacturing, and adjusted to train himself in order to get the opportunity of self-learning. It has proved the autodidact of auto -didacticism needs to have the confidence, habit and ability of self –study (Chen, Xiao-ming, 2004).

Perseverance, patience and the ability of overcoming the problems will become the issue that autodidacticism needs to face. The ability of self-study mainly depends on independence. He has to participate actively and handle the knowledge with the multiple and complex capability of technique.

3. Methodology and Theories

3.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is a research method that Barney Glaser, Sociologists of Chicago University, and Anselm Strauss brought up in different periods (Li, Pei-ling, 2007:289). It interviewed the artist Chang, Hsien-Pien firstly, and it analyzed the case by grounded theory as research basis. The autodidacticism mode of Chang, Hsien-Pien began at groundwork settling. His growing process has met the procedure of grounding and continued developing. Grounded Theory has strongly emphasized “to develop theories from data” and applied induction to build up an assigned topic to explain a certain entire phenomenon (Li, Pei-ling, 2007:289).

3.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is a research method that Denzin has advocated. It means the research will apply through a lot of different ways, data, observer and theories. Triangulation emphasizes the resource of multiple proves, and testifies the fact and phenomenon as the purpose. Denzin has divided it into four kinds of Triangulation: Data Triangulation, Researcher Triangulation, Theory Triangulation and Methodology Triangulation (Wu, Zhi-yi and Li, Feng-ru translated, 1995).

The study has been tested and verified by Weng, Xu-de, the former director of National Taiwan Craft Research and Development Institute in Caotun, and the fiber art artist Wu, Wen-qi, who has co-authored with him

in recent years. Mr. Weng, Xu-de has pointed out that Chang, Hsien-Pien researched and developed the machinery to replace bamboo-splitting by hand. It has not only shortened the time of bamboo-splitting but also the key of autodidacticism in the same outcome. Wu, Wen-qi has also tested and verified that Chang, Hsien-Pien is tolerant to new ideas. When he operated a big installation art, he broke through the form and mode of traditional utensils. He used units to compose and build. It shows the change of different frames.

4. Analysis

Chang, Hsien-Pien sort help from outside and has begun to enter the field of art and crafts of bamboo. He has applied the weaving technique of the Taiwanese aborigine and combined bamboo and climbing vine. He added new elements in traditional technique with stimulus and transforming. The study has analyzed Chang, Hsien-Pien's autodidacticism, and the features are as blow:

4.1 The Influence of Tactic Education on Family Heritage

The traditional family hand weaving industry has made him familiar to the transformation of warp and weft weaving even if he did not touch the work while he was a teenager. The weaving of *Cyperus malaccensis* or the bamboo art skill are also fiber weaving. Chang, Hsien-Pien stayed with it for a long time and it has become a kind of tactic education. It has infiltrated to affect the process of creation. From the material on hand, Chang, Hsien-Pien has taken into details. It has advanced his logical thinking of warp and weft on bamboo weaving and expended the operational way of it.

4.2 The Characteristics of Self Development

In order to expend learning and save the study and time of bamboo-splitting, Chang, Hsien-Pien researched and developed the machinery to replace bamboo-splitting by hand. The quality of processed bamboo is as good as the one split by hand. There is no other bamboo craft artist who has had the ability to research and develop this like Hsien-Pien. Thus, maestro Chang may have the lack of professional guidance, but he has saved his time and money to imitate, copy and observe to improve himself.

4.3 Collage Learning Method

Chang, Hsien-Pien has progressed through research and learning, such as producing bamboo mix with vine lamps by appointed, craft knot of the Taiwanese aborigine. The competition of thin bamboo weaving earned him the opportunity of original equipment manufacturer, and the product won the judge award. Through competition, he has refined his skill and technique. The learning path of Chang, Hsien-Pien has no certain rule. It is chosen by opportunities. It is a leap learning situation, just like collage.

4.4 Various Style of Creations

Without the restraint of mentoring relationship, Chang, Hsien-Pien's creations show various styles and different performances. According to the performance style, it is explained in four stages.

The first stage: traditional geometric performance

It emphasizes traditional skill, utensils and patterns. The transformations are all traditional geometric pattern. It applies rules and repeating two directions or four directions performance. The creation at this stage shows the traditional form. It has been collected by the National Palace Museum.

Creation: Waves Chasing



The second stage: Carving performance

It shows the three-dimensional sense of depth, and use vine as the main material. Sometimes it emerges and sometimes it fits as in the animal shape in the utensils, and it as vivid as life.

Creation: Dragon Coiling



The third stage: translucent appearance

It expresses clearly such as poem and painting. It uses the method of transmittance through the air to reduce the sense of layer on creation, and feels the transformation of bamboo and light. The pattern on the creation appears in non-figurative. The imagery of creation is just like painting. It applies bamboo to replace painting brush but creating the feature of drawing.

Creation: Happiness Everywhere



The fourth stage: installation art creation

Producing a huge installation art was originally a creation for cooperation not for exhibition purpose. Due to the performance of installation art has been departed from the restraint of traditional technique, it is able to follow one's inclinations to create. The entire performance will not certainly appear on the specific utensils but emphasize the combination of environmental atmosphere. It combines the mind and the technique into one piece.

Creation: Bird Whisper



5. Conclusions

T has studied the research of Chang, Hsien-Pien's autodidacticism. According to results of main research purposes, it has sorted out the elements below:

● Motivation induction

1. The economic induction is the starting key to push to be an autodidact. It is the biggest influence factors of adult autodidact.

2. When the technology of manufacture transformation inspires you and without any other way of learning, it is the best teacher.

● **The characteristics of self condition**

1. Chang, Hsien-Pien's grandfather is a famous person of *Cyperus malaccensis* weaving and he often watches the form of weaving warp and weft. It has long become Tacit Knowledge. He has learned but he didn't know. The results provide him invisible assistance.

2. The basic condition of Chang, Hsien-Pien to make him become an autodidact is the perseverance, patience and audacity in the face of difficulties.

3. The biggest difference from other autodidacts is his great ability of development. He uses machinery to handle the time.

● **Opportunity and mode influence each other**

Participating competitions and expanding of self capabilities increase the opportunity of learning as considered. There is no certain outcome but he influences the amount of chance.

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