



An Analysis on the Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Innovation Products in Monishan Intangible Town, Inner Mongolia

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Abstract: In the context of global cultural exchanges and new technologies, China's cultural and innovative industries are developing rapidly, which provides a new direction for the development of cultural and innovation products of intangible cultural heritage. The development of cultural and innovation products of intangible cultural heritage can provide a new path for cultural inheritance and promotion, and realize the win-win development of intangible culture and innovation products. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is a place of rich intangible cultural heritage. Intangible culture plays an active role for the sustainable economic and social development of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The paper analyzes the problems of intangible culture in Inner Mongolia by reviewing literature. The author collects and organizes research on intangible cultural heritage, and conducts field research in Monishan intangible heritage town in Hohhot. The author holds that the channels for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage can be expanded through the development of intangible cultural heritage innovation products to make more people understand intangible cultural heritage. While developing cultural and innovation products, it is necessary to design cultural and innovation products according to the calls of the times. It is suggested to play the advantages of the network platform to obtain more resources, and promote the increase of styles of cultural and innovation products.

Keywords: Inner Mongolia, intangible cultural heritage, Monishan Town, cultural and innovation products

Introduction

Cultural heritage includes the tangible and intangible, and intangible cultural heritage is presented in certain tangible forms. Intangible cultural heritage emphasizes the core skills of handicrafts, i.e., how to make the handicraft, and the impact of the handicraft on the life of the subject in the community, as well as its transmission from generation to generation. Intangible cultural heritage is historical, regional, diverse and practical in nature.

Cultural and innovation products are derived from arts. It uses the symbolic meaning, aesthetic characteristics, humanistic spirit and cultural elements of the artwork to interpret and reconstruct the original artwork. Through their own understanding of culture, designers combine the cultural elements of the original artwork with the creativity of the product to form a new type of cultural and innovation products.^[1]

With the rise of cultural and innovation industries, as well as the development status and trend of domestic cultural and innovation industries, scholars define cultural and innovation products differently. Some focus on "innovation design", or "industrial products", while some focus on "culture element". Intangible cultural heritage, as the recognized outstanding traditional culture of China, is the cultural gene of the nation. To meet the needs of the public and society, the development of intangible cultural and innovation products must rely on "creativity" and "products" to express the connotation of "culture". In this paper, intangible culture innovation products refer to products that transform national and regional non-foreign heritage capital into a capital through human creative labor for the purpose of cultural dissemination. They are produced with the combination of new elements such as technology and information technology, and meets the aesthetics of modern people.

Located in Hohhot City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the Monishan Intangible Heritage Town was assessed as a national 4A tourist attraction in September 2021. Inner Mongolia Monishan Intangible Heritage Town, in the past 20 years of



growth, won a number of awards in cultural industry. With the development of the times, the country is paying great attention to the development of intangible cultural industries, and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region offered great official support to intangible artisans to create a town with intangible characteristics.

The State Council of the People's Republic of China issued a document in 2021 on "*Several Measures to Further Promote the Development of Cultural and Innovation Products of Cultural Heritage Units*". This document pointed out that the government should adhere to the core values of socialism as the leader, in-depth excavation of the spiritual connotation of cultural relics resources, so that cultural innovation products can become an important carrier for the public to feel Chinese culture and enhance people's cultural confidence. The ingenious design of cultural connotation products not only enhance image of Chinese innovation, but also play the cultural value in modern society. Therefore, the path of intangible cultural and innovation products should be studied and developed.

Literature Review

In terms of the current domestic and foreign research, the concept of cultural and innovation products is accepted in foreign countries with the address of tourism souvenirs, but the number is not much compared with domestic research. The research content can be roughly divided into three parts: the study on the characteristics and meanings of tourism souvenirs, the study on the branding of tourism souvenirs, and the study on the development and design of tourism souvenirs.

Marie N. Elomba, Hee Jeong Yun explored the originality of six attributes of tourist souvenirs from the different perspectives of local tourists and foreign tourists, respectively^[2]. Sirisack Dalivanh analyzed the five constraints of branding tourism souvenirs and indigenous products in Rangprabang, Laos^[3]. Mun-Young Kim analyzed the data of international students from different countries in Daegu to explore the potential and preparation for developing tourist souvenirs applicable to the cultural heritage of international students in Daegu^[4]. Domestically, it seems that the main research is centered on the development and design of tourism cultural products in different regions, cultures, and perspectives, Yu Quan explores the design of tourism cultural products based on regional cultural characteristics^[5].

At present, the number and scope of studies on tourism cultural and innovation products are mature, however, there are not many studies combining intangible cultural heritage with tourism cultural and innovation products, and there are even fewer studies combining the development analysis of Inner Mongolia's intangible cultural heritage and innovation products with tourism. Inner Mongolia's intangible cultural heritage tourism resources are important cultural heritage of China and the world, and the development of its cultural and innovation products is important for the protection and utilization of the resources.

An Analysis of the current situation of Monishan Intangible Town

Monishan Intangible Town project was started in 2017 and was open to the public on June 9, 2018, the national "Cultural and Natural Heritage Day". It was officially approved as a national 3A-level scenic spot in December 2018. The town is located in Duanjiayao Village, 7.8 kilometers east of S104 road north of Hohhot City, Inner Mongolia Daqingshan Ecological and Natural Reserve. The town is located on the ancient "Baidao River" in Yinshan, which was once an important post of the "Wanli Tea Road", and was also a place of integration of nomadic and agricultural civilizations. The "Monishan Intangible Town" is initiated by Inner Mongolia Ge'rile Leather Art Culture Industry Development Co., Ltd., and the project was managed by Inner Mongolia Muni Ula Culture Communication Co., Ltd. The town focuses on some of the "intangible projects" in Hohhot and its surrounding areas, and the display areas include "intangible creation area", "intangible display area", "intangible experience area" and "intangible research and learning base"^[6].

Monishan Intangible Town is the first large open-air museum in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region that focuses on the display of intangible culture. The construction of the "Monishan Intangible Town" project aims to bring together the intangible cultural heritage and the cultural heritage in Hohhot as well as the surrounding provinces and regions, so that the intangible inheritors can show their skills to visitors, carry out intangible exhibitions and interactive activities according to the needs of different groups of people. They carry out study tours and training courses during holidays so as to stimulate people's love for traditional culture. This will drive the development of the surrounding industries.

■ **Intangible Living Learning Base**

From September 2018, Monishan Intangible Town started to build the "Non- Heritage Living Learning Base", exploring the effective ways of displaying and learning from the perspective of tourists and intangible inheritors. In order to provide a comfortable working environment for the inheritors and improve the quality of the visitors' experience, the "Intangible Living Learning Base" in Monishan Intangible Town adopted traditional culture elements every corner, creating a real life scene of people in the early days. The "Intangible Living Learning Base" allows people to get close to the intangible inheritors and take photos with them. Visitors can even experience intangible skills with their own hands under the guidance of the inheritors. Many visitors tend to buy their beloved intangible products home. The "Intangible Living Learning Base" realized the integrated mode of "living learning".

■ **Non- Heritage Art Museum**

The intangible art museum is mainly for the display of Mongolian leather carving paintings and their crafts. The museum is divided into leather art works exhibition area, leather art production experience area and cultural and innovation products area. Hundreds of leather carving works are displayed in the exhibition area. Among them, there are many precious giant leather carvings and award-winning works. When people walk into the intangible art museum, a vivid three-dimensional leather carving works representing the highest level of Mongolian; in the first floor experience area, people can watch the leather carving artisans live carving works of all the prepossess. People can also buy their favorite leather carving products including wallets, handbags, mouse pads, leather carving paintings, etc.

■ *Non- Heritage Art Culture*

The food production techniques spread in the town include a series of food production techniques such as rice cold noodles production techniques, Mongolian milk tea production techniques, oat noodle production techniques, Tokoto fish stew techniques, Deshunyuan Shaomai techniques, Gongwusu tofu production techniques, Guisui traditional pastry techniques, etc. These foods have been passed down from generation to generation, and each food has its own unique history and culture. It is not only a food but also a witness of history and culture. Inner Mongolia's food production techniques are the soul of Inner Mongolia's intangible culture, and it shows the simple folk customs of Inner Mongolia's people. The first thing that comes to visitors' mind when they mention Inner Mongolia is Inner Mongolia's food. In the town, tourists can not only taste these delicacies, but also visit and learn the production skills of the food if they are interested. A three-dimensional and all-round display of Inner Mongolian food production skills can show the charm of Inner Mongolian food.

The traditional handicraft techniques include paper-cutting, face painting, Mongolian leather carving paintings, ear pillow and movable type printing. Inner Mongolian folk paper-cutting is a product of the intermingling of grassland nomadic culture and farming culture, which can give people a sense of beauty with a simple grassland atmosphere; Mongolian leather carving painting is based on the leather. After carving, polishing, coloring and other hand-made production, the leather is more natural after oxidation. Mongolian ear pillow has an ear-sized hole in the middle, so it is called ear pillow. The display of intangible skills and culture in the town not only allows visitors to communicate with the intangible inheritors, but through participation, visitors can feel the intangible cultural heritage at hand.

Problems of Intangible Cultural and innovation products

■ *Improper program setting*

Intangible cultural heritage such as traditional cloth paste painting, Tokoto face painting, Mongolian leather art, Mongolian leather carving and other intangible cultural heritage in the town are unique features of Monishan, where visitors can learn knowledge and experience its related projects. This should be the focus of the scenic tourism products. The eight types of research tourism products currently developed in the scenic spot do not conform to the uniqueness of the region. Many program settings are homogenized, which can be applied to any other research base^[7].

■ *Improper position setting*

There is homogenization between the cultural tourism products of Monishan Intangible Town and that of other places in Inner Mongolia, the town is a base for the dissemination of the intangible, and the main content of dissemination should be the "living dissemination" of intangible projects. However, in addition to the intangible research museum, the intangible living heritage museum, the intangible art museum and a cultural environment, there are other entertainment places, such as seesaws, balance suspension bridges, swings, a natural zoo of 20 acres, restaurants, homestays, commodity areas, which will lose the priorities and features of the town.

■ *Insufficient comprehensive ability*

Intangible cultural heritage is the people's long-term experience in daily life, and the dissemination and development of intangible cultural heritage is mainly through the moral and spiritual transmission of intangible inheritors. It can be said that the inheritors directly determine the "survival" of the intangible. "However, in modern society, many intangible inheritors only focus on the improvement of skills and neglect the cultivation of their comprehensive ability, and neglect the promotion of the national spirit of Inner Mongolia. This ignorance will affect the dissemination of intangible cultural and innovation products.

Most of the intangible inheritors have not received formal higher education Although they are skillful at handicrafts, they are unable to interpret their skills and conduct further research on them. When inheriting skills, they lack the ability to innovate, which directly affects the intangible future dissemination and development. The new generation of intangible inheritors is lack of interest and sense of responsibility in intangible culture, and cannot resist the temptation of reality or the pressure of life, which will cause the fall of the intangible^[8].

Suggestions

■ *Traditional techniques and materials*

Intangible culture can demonstrate traditional life, art and culture. Most of the intangible products are made with natural materials, which reflect the rustic life of the people and the philosophical idea between man and nature. With the development of modern technology, traditional crafts have been gradually eliminated due to low production efficiency, with many skills

gradually disappearing. The application of traditional crafts and traditional materials has become fewer and fewer. In order to highlight the beauty of traditional crafts and reflect the connotation of intangible culture, traditional crafts and materials should be used. Handmade products carry the emotions and efforts of the craftsmen, and each piece of work is unique and precious.

Take the intangible product leather carving paintings as an example, although some skills can be replaced by machines, as long as the craftsmen keep on innovation, the product will still be popular. In terms of cultivating the concept of innovation, it is important to realize that social development is changing rapidly, and innovative expression is necessary for intangible inheritors. The diversity development of intangible cultural heritage cannot be separated from such innovative expression, which is the process of integrating traditional intangible culture. The meaning and value of hand embroidery is incomparable to that of machine embroidery. A skilled embroiderer can perform difficult embroidery techniques that cannot be done by machines. It presents a wonderful interpretation of embroidery, showing both the "craftsmanship" and the cultural connotation. These techniques can be used to design a variety of products in creative product design, such as horsetail embroidery clutch bags and traditional horsetail embroidery pointed shoes. Therefore, in the process of product design and development, people should pay attention to the use of traditional crafts, so as to give deeper connotation and greater cultural value to the cultural and innovation products.

■ *Cultural elements and symbols*

When developing cultural and innovation products, attention should be paid to the refinement of cultural symbols and elements rather than the blind application of intangible resources. The design should be made according to the characteristics and functions of the products so that the intangible culture can be integrated with the products. The intangible cultural creation products mainly refine the shapes, patterns and graphics involved in the intangible culture, and simplify the design by combining with modern aesthetics, presenting the traditional beauty and at the same time showing the modern aesthetic characteristics of simplicity and fashion. When refining traditional patterns, attention should be paid to visual perception, and traditional patterns can be applied in printed products.

The cultural and innovation products of the intangible town need to reflect national handicraft industry to keep pace with the times, realize the development needs of diversification, marketization, fashion and elementalization. It is suggested to give full play to the advantages of the capital in gathering talents from all sides, and improve the competitiveness to produce handicrafts with national culture characteristics. For example, China's first set of Mongolian zodiac bookmarks, released by the "Intangible" Cultural and Creative Incubation Center of Inner Mongolia Normal University, is the first set of cultural and innovation products in China with ethnic elements + zodiac stories. After a scientific study, it was finally decided to use an anthropomorphic expression method to combine the Mongolian characters and daily stories with the Chinese zodiac^[9]. Each bookmark is full of culture element, and its connotation involves Mongolian production and life folklore, daily etiquette, costume culture, etc. The small bookmark also conveys Mongolian culture with fun and science while realizing its own function.

■ *Online platform*

In the background of the information age, people should give full play to information technology in cultural and innovation products of intangible. The mode of "Internet + intangible" should be adopted to make use of the advantageous role of the Internet platform, which will help to open up a broader space for the sales of intangible cultural and innovation products. To this end, people can make use of various Internet promotion and sales platforms, and adopt a development and promotion model that combines online sales and offline activities. Through the Internet platform, people can communicate and exchange with consumers to get the feedback on cultural and innovation products scenic spots, museums and libraries to form a living and concrete mode of developing cultural and innovation products^[10]. WeChat mini-programs, mobile apps, online store sales and live broadcast should be adopted while tapping resources for the development of intangible cultural and innovation products, expanding the influence of the products and forming a good brand effect.

For example, people can use the celebrity effect and the influence of Mongolian artists to introduce "intangible paper-cutting art"(Figure 1) and "intangible cultural and innovation products" to domestic and overseas netizens through live broadcast platforms such as "KuaiShou" and "Tiktok", so as to promote the cultural treasures of the grassland.



Figure 1: a scene of paper cutting with foreign visitors

■ *Comprehensive ability*

As a “living” art, intangible cultural heritage can only be developed through inheritance and continuous innovation, so the inheritor's quality determines whether the intangible culture can be disseminated completely, and whether the process of dissemination can be integrated into the promotion of national spirit. In addition, the intangible inheritors are involved in the production process of intangible explanation and promotion of the national spirit, so the comprehensive ability of the inheritors should be good. They should constantly improve innovate, and improve the comprehensive ability of the intangible inheritors themselves.

First of all, inheritors should enhance their information sharing knowledge to ensure the authenticity, comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the intangible. When aiming at inheritance and innovation, it does not mean to abandon the tradition. Inheritors should improve their technical knowledge, which includes not only the continuous innovation skills, but also the ability to use new media technology. They should skillfully use various technical operations of social media means to carry out online display or teaching of intangible. Last but not least, the intangible inheritors should have the awareness that they are part of the town, and they should bear their responsibilities in mind and take the initiative to contribute to the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage in the town.

In terms of innovation ability, inheritors should learn the professional knowledge of intangible production. Due to the limited academic knowledge, inheritors need to take advanced training courses to improve their professional skills and theoretical knowledge on composition, color, material, etc.

To sum up, to develop intangible culture, the channels of intangible culture inheritance can be expanded through the development of intangible cultural and innovation products, so that more people can understand intangible culture. When developing cultural and innovation products, people should adhere to the principles of culture, innovation and functionality, and design cultural and innovation products according to the characteristics of the times^[11]. It is necessary to inherit traditional crafts and use traditional materials; refine the cultural elements and symbols of intangible; and give play to the advantages and functions of the network platform to obtain more resources to the types and styles of cultural and innovation products.

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