

Cultural Symbols and Inheritance of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Intangible cultural heritage exists as a cultural symbol bearing a specific meaning. Only in the process of dynamic transmission can its cultural vitality be maintained. Modernization, marketization, and urbanization have impacted the original inheritance basis of intangible cultural heritage, and the protection of intangible cultural heritage has faced all challenges before. From the perspective of cultural semiotics, this paper analyzes the function of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage. It has the functions of cultural identity, communication, and aesthetics, but it is affected by social development and change. Only by using the law of cultural symbols can Tibetan intangible cultural heritage be better inherited and utilized. Tibetan cultural symbols will play a role in collecting, sorting out, protecting, and utilizing personnel training and regional cooperation.

Keywords: Tibetan cultural resources, Tibetan cultural symbols, Tibetan intangible cultural heritage

Modernization, marketization, and urbanization have also had a profound impact on the Tibetan people. They also face the challenge of changing their mode of production, way of life, and concept of consumption. The Tibetan intangible cultural heritage is rich and diverse. Due to the aggregation and living in remote areas, it is not affected, but well protected and passed on. However, with the development of economy and the process of urbanization, Tibetans also begin to move to the cities, or more people go out to work, which has shaken the inheritance foundation of the original intangible cultural heritage of the Tibetan people. Is it to give up and disappear slowly or to inherit, protect, and utilize? This is an unprecedented and severe reality of the Tibetan intangible cultural heritage. This paper attempts to analyze the function of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage from the perspective of cultural symbols, and explore how to make use of the law of cultural symbols to better inherit and utilize Tibetan intangible cultural heritage.

Overview of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage and Cultural Symbols

Non-material cultural heritage concept is the core of the culture; intangible cultural heritage can be understood as through human symbols and material carrier in human generations between individuals or groups to follow the relatively fixed way of encoding and decoding cultural information (He, 2013); it is within the scope

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of the specific time and space to form, develop, and reflect the culture ideology of specific people common life experience. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, such as Tibetan Buddhism, Gesar's oral epic, painted stone carvings, dance and music, all need a coding system to convey complex and complete information to people, so as to gain the recognition and goodwill of Tibetan descendants, and in this process, realize the inheritance and continuation of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, so that Tibetan intangible cultural heritage exists as a cultural symbol of people in a specific area. Intangible cultural heritage is firstly a kind of cultural form, and the understanding of culture naturally applies to intangible cultural heritage. From the perspective of deconstruction, culture can be regarded as a semiotic concept, that is, culture is a web of meaning woven by people themselves (Geertz, 2008, p. 212).

Symbols are the media and tools for people to transmit information and express meaning. Only through symbols can people transmit their experience in the world to people who can receive these symbols and understand the information contained in the symbols. The diffusion process of a specific symbol system also forms a specific cultural community. Intangible cultural heritage, as a cultural species with a small number of inheritors, constructs the meaning world of collective consciousness through linguistic and non-linguistic symbols no matter how it is expressed.

Through *thangka* (唐卡), the Tibetan culture is recorded and passed down in the form of images, which helps the Tibetan descendants have a better understanding of the living habits of the ancestors, and realizes the spiritual exchange and communication between different times of the Tibetan people. It is a unique cultural symbol of the Tibetan people. Cultural symbol, therefore, becomes the carrier of intangible cultural heritage, the spread of non-material cultural heritage also with cultural symbol for the media, which means that the protection of intangible cultural heritage and the heritage should also be on the basis of its cultural symbol attribute, and should pay special attention to the formation and development of intangible cultural heritage by relying on the basis of culture. The interpretation of intangible cultural heritage from the perspective of cultural symbols can enable us to depict the characteristics of intangible cultural heritage more deeply and lay the foundation for the reasonable protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Scholars have summarized the characteristics of intangible cultural heritage from many aspects, believing that it has the characteristics of vitality, regionalism, variability, and inheritance, and specific intangible cultural heritage may not present all characteristics at the same time (Wang, 2008, p. 18).

Functions of Cultural Symbols of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

A sign is a thing that makes us think of something beyond the impression that this thing attaches to the senses (Ducrot & Todorov, 1979, p. 99). Cultural symbol is the expression form of culture, which plays a role in clearly displaying and embodying the core and essence of cultural spirit. As an important part of cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage has a more distinct function of cultural symbol. Geertz, an American anthropologist, pointed out that "culture refers to the pattern of meaning inherited from history and embodied in symbolic symbols, as well as the conceptual system expressed by symbolic systems, through which people communicate, prolong and develop their knowledge and attitude towards life" (Se, 2022). Cultural symbols have important functions, including cognitive function, communication function, and aesthetic function. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage also has these three basic symbolic cultural functions, plays the function of communication and cultural identity of the Tibetan group, and has great aesthetic value. It is an important cultural resource for the development of cultural tourism industry and cultural creative industry.

The Identity Function of Tibetan Non-material Cultural Symbols

People's cognition of a certain culture is realized through a series of cultural symbols, which play a role of "cognition" and "memory" of a specific culture. Individual cultural identity is often manifested as collective cultural identity, which is the sense of cultural affiliation, the acceptance of their own cultural symbols, and the acceptance of cultural value orientation, including identity language, clothing, living habits, communication methods, and expression methods. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage is the symbol of Tibetan culture and the spiritual homeland of Tibetan identity. For example, the Tibetan language is the common language of the Tibetan people. As the carrier of the common culture of the Tibetan people, the Tibetan language makes the communication between the Tibetan people feel friendly and natural. Another example is the unique way of life and production, common religious belief and unique clothing, food, housing and transportation of the Tibetan people. Besides, the Tibetan people share the common understanding of nature, life concept, and spiritual outlook; these are the crystallization of the wisdom of the ancestors of the Tibetan people and the shared cultural memory of the Tibetan people. Tibetan non-material culture relative to the static not renewable material culture is dynamic, constantly generated, exists in the real life of the people, and is a "living fossil" of Tibetan culture, Tibetan people's cultural identity signature role, also on Tibetan osmosis, education edification for generations to come.

The Communication Function of Tibetan Non-material Cultural Symbols

Communication function is one of the core functions of immaterial cultural symbols. Symbols are an important medium for people to communicate and communicate, including verbal symbols such as language and non-verbal symbols such as expression, decoration, color, posture, interpersonal distance, etc. For example, the Tibetan language, as a word symbol, is not only the communication tool of the Tibetan community, but also the symbol of the Tibetan community. With the same language, the groups have common communication habits and expression ways, which makes it easier to communicate and form consensus, save communication costs, and reach the same goal. For another example, as a non-verbal symbol, the Tibetan people's emotional expression, such as hospitality, helping neighbors and other ethnic characteristics, makes it easy for the Tibetan community to form a harmonious small society. For example, Tibetan festival customs and food cultural symbols, as the group communication methods of Tibetan non-words, show lively festival, helping relatives and hospitality, etc., which also reflect Tibetan group consciousness and national characteristics from different angles. To sum up, the Tibetan people are warm to the outside world and united to the inside. They are easy to communicate and cooperate with each other, which shows that Tibetan society is an open and tolerant group society.

The Aesthetic Function of Tibetan Non-material Cultural Symbols

Cultural symbols are graphic, specific, intuitive, and rich, with superficial aesthetic value, which can usually meet people's visual requirements and thus form a certain aesthetic function. This aesthetic function can also be seen from the Tibetan non-material cultural symbols. For example, the Tibetan folk songs in the Tibetan language and culture are sung in the Tibetan dialect to eulogize life, admonish future generations, or convey beautiful feelings. Their melodies are melodious, the lyrics are elegant and neat, the language is vivid and rich, and the content is simple and unflashy, revealing the order and beauty of the Tibetan folk songs. At the same time, Tibetan folk songs are a folk art form to express emotions. People look for sustenance and means of gathering and connecting emotions during work, which gives people a good feeling and spiritual sublimation. Another example is the richness of Tibetan folk activities, which are often associated with festivals and beliefs, and are vividly represented by various color symbols and images, which have placed the aspirations of the Tibetan community.

No matter what form these folk activities take, they highlight the same purpose: harmonious, lively, and cheerful, which is conducive to the development and happiness of the family. They show the spirit of a small harmonious Tibetan society, and also reflect the unity, harmony, and positive character of the Tibetan society. Another example is that the craft skills of the Tibetan people reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Tibetan people, among which the rich and colorful food and unique and beautiful clothing are of high aesthetic value. On the whole, the Tibetan intangible cultural symbols are vividly reflected in the daily life of the Tibetan society, giving people a rural, natural, simple, and happy emotional pleasure and aesthetic experience.

Challenges and Impacts of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage in Inheritance

At present, intangible cultural heritage has received more and more full attention and utilization, rising to the status of cultural competitiveness and cultural soft power, and also become an important cultural resource for the development of cultural industry. However, we should see that in the changes of social, economic, and cultural environment such as modernization, globalization, marketization, urbanization, and informatization, the foundation for the survival of intangible cultural heritage has been strongly impacted, and its inheritance and utilization have shown obvious weakness and faced severe challenges. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage is no exception. Generally speaking, the impact and challenge of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage are mainly reflected in three aspects.

The Survival Basis of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage Has Changed

Modernization and globalization have replaced the agricultural civilization, and the cultural events and cultural habits formed under the background of agricultural civilization gradually fade into the perspective of modern life. Cultural globalization, economic integration and a high degree of social openness and communication have made the cultural exchanges and interactions among different groups increasingly form a large cultural fusion. Traditional characteristic cultures have lost their former functions and elegant demeanor, and are increasingly going out of date. Tibetan intangible cultures, such as Tibetan folk literature, Tibetan traditional medicine, Tibetan traditional skills and Tibetan traditional drama, are potentially disappearing.

Tibetan People's Attitude Towards Intangible Cultural Heritage Has Changed

Urbanization and market consumption society have changed rural lifestyles, consumption patterns, and ways of thinking, as well as people's attitudes toward intangible cultural heritage. Modernization has led to the change of people's life taste and consumption mode, and urbanization has made the urban economic relationship and life style penetrate into the countryside extensively and continuously. We can also see the change in Tibetan areas: Nowadays, most young people go out to work to earn money, leaving only the elderly and children living in ancient villages. Folk activities in the daily life of villages cannot be carried out normally because of the lack of people. However, most of the young people in the new era like the lifestyle and entertainment in the new era, and they are unwilling to learn and inherit the intangible culture. The existing inheritors of intangible culture are gradually aging and dying, resulting in the intangible cultural heritage not being passed down.

There Are Insufficient Inheritors of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

The consciousness of the Tibetan people to protect the intangible cultural heritage is gradually weak, the inheritors are gradually separated from the generations, and the talents engaged in the intangible cultural heritage are seriously insufficient. Intangible cultural heritage has no place in the hearts of some young people, and the change of rural culture makes people no longer pay attention to its significance, leading to damage and destruction

everywhere. At the same time, the intangible cultural heritage inheritance people generally are older group; it is the way Kou Chuan Xin Shou, meager profit achievement, a long time; this way of cultural inheritance and spread of sustainability is easily affected by external factors, such as heir to disagree, utilitarian factors, so the intangible cultural heritage in the eyes of young people interest is not big, need not to be strong. The lack of motivation to learn and inherit leads to a serious shortage of talents engaged in intangible cultural heritage.

We Will Give Full Play to the Role of Cultural Symbols in the Inheritance of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

The cultural symbol function of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage will play an important role in inheritance and utilization. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage is an important bridge to inherit Tibetan culture, maintain Tibetan harmonious small society, enhance the cohesion of Tibetan groups, and strengthen the cultural identity of the Tibetan people. Cultural symbol resources are the source of the development of cultural industry, which has a great impact on the development of cultural industry, so it is of great significance to play the role of cultural symbols in the inheritance and utilization of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage.

Collect and Sort out Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage Resources

Tibetan intangible cultural heritage resources are very rich, and a large number of Tibetan intangible cultural resources need to be sorted out and collected. Tibetan intangible cultural heritage resources are the premise and foundation of Tibetan cultural industry, and the freshness of Tibetan cultural symbols reflects the characteristics and localness of Tibetan cultural industry, and determines the competitiveness of Tibetan cultural industry. Sorting out Tibetan intangible cultural resources is also beneficial to the protection and utilization of resources, and to the development of Tibetan cultural exchange, publicity, and education.

Tibetan intangible cultural heritage has been passed down from generation to generation by Tibetan ancestors, and it exists in the daily life of Tibetan people. From different regions to different villages, the intangible cultural heritage has unique cultural characteristics, and they have similarities but also various personalized contents. Because of the dynamic development, they have both the form of inheritance and development and innovation; some are well preserved and some are missing and incomplete; both are in the text and in the inheritor. Therefore, the collection and arrangement of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage is a big cultural project, which is difficult and requires great effort.

Tibetan intangible cultural heritage has distinct cultural symbols, which can be classified and collected according to the law of cultural symbols. On the one hand, finish writing the history of Tibetan culture, Tibetan characteristic culture, an introduction to the Tibetan national intangible cultural heritage directory, and other books, and production of digital video and audio, realization of Tibetan culture by transmission of audio and video and texts, and record the seat of the Tibetan immaterial cultural heritage type and heir, activity way. Thus, it is helpful to provide reference for the government's protection decision, and also provide first-hand raw materials for Tibetan cultural creativity. On the other hand, it is suggested to build symbol database or cultural symbol network of intangible cultural resources according to different Tibetan regions, such as Tibetan folk culture, Tibetan folk literature, Tibetan quyi, Tibetan sports, Tibetan dance, Tibetan food, and other categories in Amdo region.

Classify Protection and Utilization of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

Cultural symbol is the expression form of culture, including the content of “signifier” and “signified”, that

is, the revealed and hidden cultural information. Therefore, intangible cultural heritage resources can be divided into implicit and explicit parts from the expression form. For example, resources such as art and culture belong to the explicit part, while the deep connotation of folk culture is implicit, which is generally expressed through carriers or cultural atmosphere. When folk culture tourism reaches a high level, it pays much attention to the process of building cultural environment and cultural atmosphere, that is, it can meet the needs of tourists to pursue the original cultural enjoyment. Only with the help of cultural symbols as the intermediary can the effective transformation of cultural resources be realized. According to the law of cultural symbols, on the one hand, the content of the explicit part should be fully protected, Tibetan cultural symbols and signs should be fully displayed in cultural tourism, and colorful folk activities should be displayed. Tibetan spiritual outlook, personality characteristics, on the other hand, embedded in the Tibetan population dynamic life, so do not put these simple as form, and must protect the original ecological Tibetan way of life, the cultural flavor to make it more attractive and interesting to the readers, in order to guide the tourists to participate in and experience the real taste of Tibetan culture. Similarly, in the development of Tibetan cultural industry, we can make full use of the intangible cultural resources of the Tibetan, such as Tibetan art performance, folk customs appreciation, Tibetan food tasting, Tibetan sports competitive performance, Tibetan craft display, etc., which belong to the cultural industry categories with economic and aesthetic value. At the same time, the intangible cultural heritage of the implicit part of spiritual culture and infiltration by symbols in the related Tibetan culture and creative industries must strengthen the symbols of Tibetan cultural industry economy consciousness, the Tibetan culture symbol penetration in the industrial chain, and improve the cultural content of the related industries, so as to improve the culture of the industry competitiveness.

We Will Strengthen Publicity and Education on Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

To strengthen the publicity and education of the connotation of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, we must recognize the value and significance of cultural symbols, improve the protection consciousness of the Tibetan people, and train cultural heirs and creative talents. Although governments at all levels pay more attention to and protect Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, their lack of participation and initiative as inheritors and users will inevitably affect the cultural inheritance and utilization. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the publicity and education of the value and significance of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage through local cultural Windows, media, and other channels, in a way popular with the masses, to improve the Tibetan people's recognition of Tibetan cultural symbols, and consciously protect and inherit the culture. Of course, in the development of Tibetan cultural industry, the government is the leading role, the market is the platform, and the public is the main body. The government should pay attention to the implementation of the principle of people's livelihood in the protection, fully mobilize the Tibetan people to actively participate in the experience economy and symbol economy of the cultural industry, so that they can get benefits from it and understand the long-term value of their own culture, and guide them not to rush for quick success and instant benefits and kill the goose that lays the golden egg, so as to ensure the sustainable development of the cultural industry.

Inheritors of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage can be classified and protected according to the characteristics and current situation of different types of inheritors. First, we should give policy and financial support and protection to inheritors, and second, we should strengthen the training of the next generation of inheritors so as not to lose their heritage. At the same time, we will pay attention to the cultivation of creative talents of intangible cultural heritage, especially the education of the next generation of Tibetan culture, and bring

Tibetan dance, Tibetan folk literature, Tibetan sports, Tibetan traditional opera, and Tibetan traditional art into schools and classrooms. Encourage the establishment of Tibetan cultural characteristics of the school; reduce the next generation of Tibetan cultural symbols on the lack of knowledge. Colleges and universities in Tibetan areas have opened Tibetan cultural creative design majors to cultivate senior talents of Tibetan culture.

To Establish a Cooperation Platform for the Inheritance and Utilization of Tibetan Intangible Cultural Heritage

Although Tibetan intangible cultural heritage has its own characteristics in different Tibetan regions, there are many similarities and similarities marked by cultural symbols, such as Tibetan thangka, Tibetan dance, Tibetan Buddhism, Tibetan food, and so on. Different regions have different cultural symbols, such as the characteristics of folk activities in different places and the food culture in different places. If we can build a cooperation platform based on the characteristics of Tibetan cultural symbols, it will be easier to reach consensus and exchange purposes, learn from each other in the experience of resource protection, and achieve win-win cooperation in industrial development.

Yunnan Province is rich in ethnic cultural resources. It is one of the provinces with strong tourism resources in the country, and it takes the lead in the development of ethnic cultural resources. Diqing area is a Tibetan living area in Yunnan province, where there are many experiences that can be used for reference in the protection and development of Tibetan intangible cultural resources. The local government attaches great importance to the development and industrialization of Tibetan intangible cultural resources, which makes Tibetan cultural products in this area stand out in the tourism market of Yunnan province and the whole country, and sets up distinctive Tibetan cultural symbols in the cultural tourism market, creating good economic, cultural and social benefits for Diqing area.

Conclusion

In the protection and utilization of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, the success lies in highlighting the role of cultural symbols. To promote the protection and utilization of symbols, adhere to the protection of use, use protection, do not change the local, do not give up the original taste, and do not lose the tradition. Only on the premise of exploring the innovation of cultural industry can it have more vitality and competitiveness, and then handle the relationship between inheritance, protection, and utilization of Tibetan intangible cultural heritage, so that Tibetan traditional culture will benefit the Tibetan people and have a long history.

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