

Innovative Development of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Traditional Skills in the New Era

-- Take the Huzhou Writing Brush Craft as an Example

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Abstract: The intangible cultural heritage of traditional skills is an important part of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Now under the background of great development and prosperity of socialist culture, it is particularly important for the inheritance and development of this kind of excellent traditional culture in the new era. Huzhou Writing Brush is one of the “four treasures of the study” and an important symbol of the long and splendid Chinese civilization. On May 20, 2006, the traditional craftsmanship of Huzhou Writing Brush was added to China’s first batch of intangible cultural heritage list by the State Council. This paper mainly studies the innovative development of intangible cultural heritage of traditional skills in the new era by taking the Huzhou Writing Brush craft as an example, and puts forward corresponding innovative development strategies and suggestions.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Huzhou Writing Brush craft, Traditional skills, Innovative development.

1. Introduction

Huzhou Writing Brush (pinyin: Hu Bi; short for Hu Brush) originated in Shanlian Town, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China. It originated early and has a long history of thousands of years. After the Yuan Dynasty, Xuan Brush gradually declined, and Hu Brush gradually became famous in the world, and became one of the “four treasures of the study” alongside Hui ink, Xuan paper and Duan inkstone. In the new era, the craftsmanship of making Hu Brush has been listed in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage, becoming an important part of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. However, with the development of modern information technology and the continuous evolution of writing tools, the way of writing is no longer based on brushes. Therefore, the inheritance and development of Huzhou Writing Brush craft are gradually facing difficulties.

In 2017, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture, which stated that key tasks include the protection and inheritance of Chinese cultural heritage; Implement the project of inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage and further improve the protection system of intangible cultural heritage; Implement the revitalization plan of traditional crafts. In order to comply with the requirements of the Party and the state for the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture, the author believes that, for the intangible cultural heritage of traditional skills such as Hu Brush craft, we should first be good disseminators of excellent culture and developers of traditional skills, correctly understand the relationship between inheritance and development, and constantly give Hu Brush new vitality. On the basis of creative transformation, the innovative development of Hu Brush will be realized.

2. Hu Brush: a Treasure of China’s Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1. The Origin, Development and Characteristics of Hu Brush

The historical and cultural nature of Hu Brush is its unique feature. Hu Brush has a long history in Shan Lian Town, originated from about the Jin Dynasty. After the development of the Tang and Song Dynasties, the craftsmanship of Hu Brush were rapidly improved. During the Southern Song Dynasty, because of its beautiful environment and suitable climate, Huzhou became the preferred place for literati and officialdom to live in seclusion in the mountains and forests, where they splashed ink here and created calligraphy and painting to their heart’s content, which led to the development of study utensils. Before the Yuan Dynasty, the country was most famous for Xuan Brush. However, in the Yuan Dynasty, Xuan Brush was despised by the rulers, and Xuan City was located in the south of the Yangtze River, with frequent wars, while Huzhou was adjacent to Xuan City, but it happened to survive, which made a large number of Xuan brush workers go south to take refuge, with the majority of the population moving to neighboring Huzhou, at the same time, Xuan brush craft were brought to Huzhou, which improved the local brush-making skills in Huzhou. It promoted the development of Hu Brush-making industry, and Huzhou pen became famous. The fame of Hu Brush is also related to Zhao Mengfu, a great painter and calligrapher of the Yuan Dynasty, whose ancestral home is Wuxing, which is today’s Huzhou City. He attached great importance to the skill of making Hu Brush. It was recorded in the Annals of Huzhou Prefecture that Zhao Mengfu asked someone to make brush, but if one brush was not satisfactory, it had to be dismantled and remade. The requirements for making brush were very strict. This requirement was continued by later generations, and the reputation of Hu Brush’s excellent production spread, thus Hu Brush established its position as the crown of the brush and

became the first of the four treasures of the study.

2.2. Hu Brush Craft: How to Make a Perfect Hu Brush?

After the Yuan Dynasty, the brush-making industry in Huzhou rose rapidly and became the center of the national brush-making industry. Hu Brush can replace Xuan Brush not only because of its historical evolution, but also because of its inherent quality, production skills and writing quality. Generally speaking, Hu Brush has "Three Righteousness and Four Virtues". From the level of production skills, Hu Brush has "three meanings", namely "fine, pure and beautiful". In terms of the quality and effect of writing, Hu Brush has "four virtues", namely "neat, sharp, round and healthy". Hu Brush craftsmen adhering to the principle of "Three Righteousness" produce Hu Brush with "Four Virtues", which is why Hu Brush is known as "Mao Ying's skill is the best in the world".

Hu Brush production all depends on the craft, the whole process is divided into 12 main processes, such as material selection, basin, knot, set, pudun, mosaic, brush selection, lettering, etc. The size of the process together can reach more than 120, each main process is specialized by technicians, pay attention to the selection of materials, exquisite production, especially sharp and unique. [4] The "Ying" of the Hu Brush is the neat, transparent and shiny edge at the tip of the pen, which is called "sunspot" by the pen craftsmen, which is the most unique feature of the Hu Brush that distinguishes it from other pens. The depth of "sunspot" is the length of sharp, which is elaborately made of superior goat hair through nearly a hundred processes. Bai Juyi's "although the hair is light, the work is very heavy" to describe the fine process and complex process of Hu Brush production techniques will not make people feel exaggerated.

After more than two thousand years, Hu Brush in Shanlian Town has a long history. Because of its excellent production and quality, it ranks first among the four treasures of the study. Hu Brush greatly enriches the history and regional culture of Huzhou, contains rich folk customs, embodies the local characteristics of history and culture, and is an important part of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation.

2.3. Hu Brush: Rich Cultural Connotation and Artistic Value

Hu Brush culture reflects the real life of working people. Different types of Hu Brush are suitable for different fields, and they also condense people's artistic pursuits. It also reflects different cultural spirits and cultural connotations. At the same time, craftsmen continue to create to reflect the people's livelihood at that time, and to express the author's personal emotions, perceptions and thinking.

Because of the characteristics of raw materials and manufacturing methods, Hu Brush has produced four technological characteristics such as "sharp, even, round, and healthy", which people call "four virtues". The reason why it is called "four virtues" is the mistake of the sound of "four virtues". In fact, the "virtue" of "four virtues" is regarded as the solution of "character" and also as the solution of "character". It refers to both making pens and doing things for people. As far as the pen is concerned, it is Fengjian, Yingqi, Cangyuan, and Haojian. For people, it is necessary to be technically precise, to see the virtuous, to be round inside and outside, and to be mentally healthy. And when you use a pen, you need to be Fangzheng, and people also need to be Fangzheng, so that you can make a good pen. Among the four

virtues, circle and health are the most rare. When you use it to draw a circle in your hand, you don't feel too tough or deep. As soon as the circle is over, the tip of the pen will naturally converge into a sharp cone, and the more you use it, the more handy you are, and you can wave it freely.

2.3.1. The Aesthetic Culture of Hu Brush

The aesthetic culture of Hu Brush mainly includes the following two points: (1) Hundreds of flowers bloom and are very beautiful. There are hundreds of different types of Hu Brushes, which are usually divided into five categories according to their raw material characteristics: Yanghao, Yunhao, Wolf Hao, Zihao, and Chicken Hao, the so-called "Wuhao". According to the information, Su Shi used chicken brush to write Yan Zhenqing's original running script, and Zhao Ziang also used Yanghao when he wrote "Ten Thousand Characters in Japanese Books": Wu Changshuo used Suyang Hao when writing stone drum texts in modern times. (2) It varies from work to work and is unique. As far as the selection of materials and the creativity of the works are concerned, the craftsmen of the lake pen first rely on the nature of the material itself, implement the skills according to the material, and use their own creativity to produce high-quality Hu Brush, using horns, mahogany, ivory, red sandalwood and other materials., the high-quality pens produced have been praised by calligraphers and painters from all over the world.

2.3.2. Hu Brush National Culture

My country's traditional craft culture has a long history, and the technology is quite complete. Represented by Hu Brush, it has achieved considerable results since the reform and opening up. Not only have many well-known Hu Brush masters imparted their skills, but also trained many outstanding Hu Brush personnel. Moreover, innovation and promotion have been strengthened, and the rich and colorful folk cultural characteristics have been integrated, which quickly won the love and affirmation of the people. Each lake pen is deeply integrated with the cultural characteristics of its own nation, reflecting the heavy historical and cultural heritage, rich modern folk customs heritage, and simple folk culture in various places. The creators also make the overall lake pen through the integration of their own thinking and emotions. The works are more harmonious and full of emotion. Through the lake pen process, we can more directly and clearly know the cultural, economic and technological pomp of the year, which increases people's impressions and feelings, and is also the artistic significance of the lake pen. Only by achieving a comprehensive combination of national cultural heritage and the creation of Hu Brush can we carry out the innovative design of Hu Brushes, inherit and carry forward them, and make Hu Brush famous in the world.

2.3.3. The Characteristics and Value of Hu Brush Culture and Art

Huzhou brush is a precious traditional craftsmanship of the Chinese nation. It is inherited and inherited by the master and apprentice and taught by mouth. It fully reflects the creativity of the Chinese people and the breadth of human art, and has great historical significance, artistic value, and aesthetic value. Cultural value is also the most fundamental meaning of Huzhou Hu Brush. Huzhou Hu Brush is the embodiment of multiple meanings such as its own carrying valuable resource value, rich history, diverse humanities, and historical spirit. Hu Brush symbolizes the vivid Chinese national cultural spirit. Hu Brush is also a reflection of my country's calligraphy culture. The varied materials, contents and production

techniques evolved from the different eras described above are different, but what is expressed behind them are the unique characteristics of the times and national characteristics endowed by the wisdom of the working people and history. Through the Hu Brush, we see the profound cultural connotation of the Chinese nation, especially the selection of materials and the evolution of skills of the Hu Brush. The ingenious design and conception can fully express the ideas that the creator wants to express, which plays a key role in the embodiment of the artistic value of the Hu Brush. After the selection of materials and the use of techniques, the original ordinary raw materials are transformed into more exquisite Hu Brush artworks, which add to its artistic value. Only by fully understanding the cultural value of the lake pen can we protect the lake pen more perfectly. Not only do the lake pen become an appreciation cultural relic in the museum, but the lake pen become a popular craft work in contemporary society, which is closely related to people's daily life.

3. Hu Brush Craft in the New Era — Challenge and Inheritance

The Hu Brush was once loved by people because of its excellent craftsmanship. However, with the advent of the information age, the evolution of writing tools and people's pursuit of economic interests, there are fewer users, the loss of craftsmen and the shortage of inheritors of Hu Brush, which have seriously impacted the traditional Hu Brush craft and put the development of Hu Brush in a dilemma, so in the new era of development, we should actively protect and innovate the inheritance and development of Hu Brush production techniques.

The main reasons why the inheritance of Hu Brush is in trouble are as follows.

First of all, people's writing tools have changed from the original brush to various types of hard pens, and the emergence of "paperless" life has gradually reduced the scope of use of the Hu Brush, and the survival and development space of the Hu Brush has been limited.

Secondly, the existing craftsmen who make Hu Brush are in an aging state, and few young people are willing to calm down to learn this traditional craftsmanship under the fast-paced life mode of economic take-off. The economic benefits brought by Hu Brush production are also gradually decreasing in the torrent of the development of the times. People pursue a higher quality of life and need more economic income, while the economic benefits brought by Hu Brush production can no longer meet people's higher economic needs. Therefore, Hu Brush once fell into the predicament of no inheritance. On November 6, 2021, Zhejiang Satellite TV created a topic discussion on "Why Young People Don't Want to Learn Traditional Handicrafts" on Sina Weibo platform, taking Hu Brush as an example. A total of 1.4 million people participated in the vote, among which "the production process is too cumbersome and boring, not proportional to income" ranked first, more than 40% of the people think that the production process of Hu Brush is complex, handicraft production needs to pay a lot of time and energy, but the income is not up to the ideal state, the industry cannot provide corresponding remuneration, which is considered by most people to be the biggest obstacle to the inheritance of traditional handicraft.

Thirdly, "a lack of opportunities to learn traditional handicraft" ranked second, nearly 40% of people think that it

is difficult to contact and have no chance to learn these traditional handicrafts in daily life. Today, the inheritance of Hu Brush is facing severe challenges, one of which is the single and closed way of inheritance. The production skills of Hu Brush mainly rely on the pairing of teachers and apprentices or family transmission, which can ensure the purity and exquisite skills, but also limit the spread and popularization of skills, resulting in the reduction of the number of inheritors and the growth of age, as well as the increase of the difficulty and threshold for young people to contact and learn skills. Therefore, how to reform and innovate the way of inheritance of Hu Brush and let more young people participate in the learning and inheritance of Hu Brush craft has become an important issue for the development of Hu Brush culture.

Fourthly, the development of modern society is too fast, and the attraction of new things is strong. In the era of rapid development of science and technology, the production technology of Hu Brush lacks its own innovation and promotion, and the production speed and scale of Hu Brush, which is mainly made by hand, cannot keep up with the pace of the times, so it is easy to be replaced by social development. Only by exploring the contemporary value of excellent traditional culture from the perspective of development can we surge up the waves of the new era and inject strong impetus into the firm cultural self-confidence and the great development and prosperity of culture.

In the past, the skill of making Hu Brush was brilliant, which was of great significance to the development of brush industry in China, and played a significant role in promoting cultural exchanges and enhancing national cohesion. In the new era, as an excellent traditional culture, Hu Brush craft shoulder the mission of disseminating Chinese culture and telling Chinese stories well, and need to constantly enhance vitality and influence to create new brilliance of Chinese culture.

4. The Way of Inheritance of Hu Brush Craft in the New Era: the Perfect Combination of Innovation and Tradition

In sharp contrast to Hu Brush, in the past two years, some representatives of traditional culture have been able to restore their vitality and vitality, attracting people's attention again and setting off an upsurge of cultural inheritance and development. Nezha is presented in the form of animated films, creating a full and vivid character image, which is loved by the public. Han Chinese clothing is also increasingly sought after by people, becoming more every day, people can wear Han Chinese clothing on the street, the improved version while retaining the elements of Han Chinese clothing is also more convenient for the public to wear and adapt to seasonal changes; The Palace Museum has also produced some commemorative cultural relics one after another, which not only brings economic benefits, but also carries forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, publicizes and promotes the items symbolizing the excellent traditional Chinese culture to all parts of the country and even the world, and strengthens the cultural self-confidence of the nation.

Hu Brush can learn from experience, constantly weed out the old and bring forth the new, integrate its own cultural characteristics, better inherit and develop in the new era, improve its influence, and disseminate the value of Chinese

excellent traditional culture.

4.1. Adapting to Social Development: The Position and Value of Hu Brush in Contemporary Cultural Industry

In the information age, for most people, the use value of Hu Brush is gradually decreasing, even becoming a high gift, and the change of writing use determines its development direction. Hu Brush was originally used to write records to meet the needs of human production and life, so it is a practical and market-oriented folk art. With the development of economy and society, people pursue a higher quality of life and more economic interests, writing methods are more convenient and diverse, brushes are gradually separated from daily writing methods, from the original daily writing tools gradually transformed into an artistic carrier, its appreciation function is enhanced, so Hu Brush must adapt to the development of calligraphy art. Calligraphy and painting have become a fashion, thus stimulating market demand and development potential. Just as the emergence of photography has not replaced painting so far, calligraphy, as a culture, has irreplaceable artistic and aesthetic significance. In Chinese calligraphy art and Chinese painting art with cultural characteristics, brush as a tool still occupies a dominant position. Hu Brush culture can still show its vitality and vitality through the form of painting and calligraphy. Therefore, Hu Brush can better adapt to the development and changes of economy and society, so as to improve its added value and economic benefits. As a traditional production technique, it is possible for Hu Brush production to develop into popular culture.

4.2. Innovative Communication Channels: Promotion, Display and Creation of Hu Brush in Education, Network and Cultural Tourism

It is of great significance for the inheritance and development of Hu Brush to innovate the transmission channels of Hu Brush.

On the basis of traditional media communication, we can also innovate the communication mode of Hu Brush. Since 2011, the Ministry of Education issued the Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Calligraphy Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, clearly stipulated that calligraphy education courses should be offered in primary and secondary schools, and calligraphy education gradually recovered and developed in China. Calligraphy class can not only learn and practice calligraphy, but also take Hu Brush, the first of the four treasures of the study, as the object of learning, bring Hu Brush culture into classroom learning, cultivate and stimulate the interest and ability of the next generation of students in the combination of basic education and personal practice, which is of great benefit to the inheritance of Hu Brush. Colleges and universities can also offer elective courses and social practice related to learning Hu Brush, carry out calligraphy education, broaden learning channels, and expand its dissemination and influence.

Secondly, in addition to publicizing and reporting Hu Brush news on the Internet, Hu Brush culture can be integrated into some popular audio-visual works, such as some life programs, setting the inheritance of non-heritage culture as the theme of publicity and education, popularizing Hu Brush culture, and bringing the public to learn and

appreciate such excellent traditional culture in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. Or by shooting popular short videos and micro-films, we can adapt to people's fast-paced life, so that people can watch and participate in discussions on various platforms.

Thirdly, as an ancient city in the south of the Yangtze River, Huzhou has rich natural and cultural landscapes. Huzhou was rated as the 20th best tourist destination city in China in 2018, and the top ten beautiful cities in China from 2020 to 2021. With the rapid development of local tourism, the development of Hu Brush culture can be combined with tourism activities. Huzhou has a rich historical and cultural background, so we should develop and utilize the local historical and cultural resources of Hu Brush, combine the development of tertiary industry with cultural revitalization, and accelerate the creative transformation and innovative development of Hu Brush culture.

4.3. Introducing and Inheriting Talents: Talent Selection and Training Program for Hu Brush Craft

For the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage of Hu Brush, the key lies in the cultivation of inheritors, who have mastered rich culture and exquisite skills, and can better play their main role in promoting the development of intangible culture. However, people's life span is limited, crafts need to be passed down from generation to generation, people as a carrier, once disappeared, intangible culture may lose the source of inheritance, so we should attach importance to the introduction of inheritance talents. In addition to recruiting local inheritors in Huzhou, we can also train and exchange by introducing scholars and talents from other places. Local scholars can experience Hu Brush and learn Hu Brush culture through Hu Brush Museum or Hu Brush Culture Festival, while foreign scholars can set up special training courses through online education, so that people interested in this skill can learn anytime and anywhere. With the combination of online and offline, if the scholars are not satisfied after the on-site visit, they can follow up the study, and the details of the Hu Brush can be more fully displayed. With the increase of channels to recruit and attract inheritors, more opportunities and ways are given to the public to learn the skills of making Hu Brush. In addition, the existing inheritors of Hu Brush can also conduct teaching tours, give lectures throughout the country, organize activities on inheriting the traditional skills of Hu Brush, lead the fashion in schools and society, and expand the influence of intangible cultural heritage.

4.4. Hu Brush Weeds Through the Old to Bring forth the New: Seeking Balance and Breakthrough between Tradition and Modernity

If creative transformation focuses on "past", innovative development focuses on "future", that is, on the basis of creative transformation, the connotation and form of contemporary value are constantly tested and developed in practice. Excellent traditional culture needs to continue to move forward after adapting to contemporary culture and coordinating with modern society. Because history is advancing, excellent traditional culture should also continue to develop and progress, weed out the old and bring forth the new, and surge up the waves of the new era.

How to make Hu Brush adapt to the needs of the times and

move towards a broader market has become an urgent issue for Hu Brush people. In my opinion, the design and function of innovative Hu Brush is an effective way, which can be carried out from the following aspects:

Firstly, according to different styles of calligraphy and painting, we design Hu Brush suitable for various brushes and ink colors, such as hard brush, soft brush, double brush, wolf brush, etc., to meet the needs and preferences of different calligraphers and painters.

Secondly, according to different consumer groups, we should design fashionable and personalized Hu Brush, such as cartoon images, star signatures, creative patterns, etc., to attract more young people and children to use Hu Brush.

Thirdly, combined with modern technology, we have developed intelligent and multi-functional Hu Brush, such as connecting computers or mobile phones, adjusting ink color or thickness, saving or sharing calligraphy and painting works, so as to improve the convenience and interest of Hu Brush.

Fourthly, combining with other cultural elements, we should develop Hu Brush with characteristics and connotations, such as integrating national customs, local characteristics, historical stories, etc., so as to increase the cultural value and artistic charm of Hu Brush.

Through these innovations, Hu Brush can expand more market space and consumption areas, and also enhance its brand image and competitiveness. At the same time, innovation does not mean abandoning tradition, but seeking change in inheritance and innovation in change. Only in this way can Hu Brush continue to play its unique role and charm in Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

As a national intangible cultural heritage, the skill of making Hu Brush is also an excellent traditional culture of our country. In the new era, because of the rapid development of science and technology and people's pursuit of higher economic interests, there are fewer people using Hu Brush, the loss of craftsmen, and the lack of inheritors, so the inheritance and development were once in trouble, and the technique of making Hu Brush was impacted. Hu Brush needs to adapt to the development of modern society, innovate in the original communication channels, attract and introduce more inheritance talents, continue to weed out the old and bring forth the new, and constantly stimulate its innovative vitality. We should take active measures to protect it. The protection of intangible cultural heritage means the protection of excellent traditional culture and the inheritance of ancient Chinese culture. Inheritance is responsible for history and development is responsible for the future. In order to adapt to the current development of cultural and creative industries in China, the brush industry should not only be satisfied with passive protection, but also adapt to the diversification of market demand and fully tap its creative value. If we want to

maintain the vitality of Hu Brush, we cannot do without innovation, only continuous innovation can stimulate the vitality and vitality of Hu Brush, an ancient traditional skill. Therefore, in the new era, we should firmly grasp that innovation is the first driving force for development, strive to achieve the innovative development of excellent traditional culture, so that non-legacy will never fade, and turn up our own waves in the tide of development of the times.

In the process of manufacturing Hu Brush, focus on making high-level lake pen finished products with the help of pen selection skills, combine traditional craftsmanship with contemporary calligraphy culture, and strive to make Hu Brush into daily necessities, calligraphy supplies and high-end gifts, and at the same time improve the daily life of the people. It provides a favorable attempt to meet social needs. As the inheritor of the lake pen technology, we must not only abandon the traditional complex and ineffective technology, but also conform to the trend of the times, fully integrate the traditional lake pen manufacturing technology and modern aesthetic consciousness, pull each other and interact with each other, and create a modern lake pen suitable for the characteristics of the new era. Only by making full use of the artistic energy of traditional Chinese culture can we continuously re-select and re-innovate the traditional Chinese lake pen culture, publicize the national cultural spirit of the lake pen in an all-encompassing way, and make bold innovations on the basis of inheriting traditional craftsmanship., and strive to create and produce modern exquisite and practical works of art that are suitable for the spirit of contemporary art and meet the needs of the general public. Only then can the lake pen manufacturing technology remain strong. The vitality of the lake brush art can open up the brilliance of innovation and development.

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