

Research on the Dissemination Strategies for Promoting Jiang'an Bamboo Carving Intangible Cultural Heritage in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: As a time-honored traditional handicraft, Jiang'an Bamboo Carving is an important part of China's national-level intangible cultural heritage. However, under the impact of modern industrial civilization, its inheritance and development are facing severe challenges. This paper aims to sort out the cultural background and historical evolution of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving, analyze its current living status and inheritance dilemmas through field investigations, and focus on exploring the significance and value of introducing this intangible cultural heritage (ICH) into the college and university system. On this basis, the paper proposes a multi-dimensional development strategy centered on "integrating ICH into colleges and universities", including specific paths such as inviting inheritors to campus, organizing campus cultural activities, and integrating social resources. It provides theoretical references and practical solutions for the living inheritance and innovative development of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving.

Keywords: Jiang'an Bamboo Carving, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), Inheritance, Dissemination in Colleges and Universities, Development Strategy.

1. Introduction

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is the crystallization of human wisdom and civilization, and a living embodiment of a nation's cultural memory and identity. Amid the tide of globalization and modernization, many precious ICH items are facing universal dilemmas such as inheritance gaps, shrinking audiences, and compressed living spaces. How to effectively protect, inherit, and revitalize these valuable cultural resources has become a crucial issue in contemporary society^[12].

Jiang'an County, located in southern Sichuan Province, China, has nurtured a unique and charming traditional handicraft—Jiang'an Bamboo Carving—thanks to its abundant resources of Moso bamboo. Using the inner yellow layer of high-quality Moso bamboo, exquisite artworks are created through various techniques such as carving, inlaying, and painting, earning it the reputation as "bamboo ivory". In 2008, the craftsmanship of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving was included in the expanded list of the first batch of national-level intangible cultural heritage items, with the heritage number: VII-46, which confirms its cultural and artistic value at the national level^[2].

However, like many traditional handicrafts, the inheritance of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving is not a smooth journey. The older generation of artisans is aging, while the younger generation lacks motivation to learn due to the long learning cycle (requiring 3-5 years of systematic study) and insignificant economic benefits^[4]. The traditional family-based and master-apprentice inheritance models are unsustainable, and the narrow market space further exacerbates its survival crisis. Against this background, exploring new inheritance paths and dissemination venues is particularly urgent.

Colleges and universities, as hubs for knowledge inheritance, cultural innovation, and talent cultivation, possess unique advantages such as intensive resources, active

thinking, and interdisciplinary integration, which provide new possibilities for the inheritance and innovation of ICH^[6]. "Integrating ICH into colleges and universities" is not only a cultural protection initiative but also a two-way empowerment process: ICH injects profound cultural connotations and vivid local cases into college education, while colleges and universities provide intellectual support and platform guarantees for the academic research, dissemination, and modern transformation of ICH^[7].

Based on the reality of protecting and inheriting Jiang'an Bamboo Carving, this study aims to systematically explore the strategies and paths for its dissemination in colleges and universities, striving to provide an operable plan to solve its inheritance dilemmas, and at the same time offer references for the modern survival and development of other similar ICH items.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Domestic Research on Integrating ICH into Colleges and Universities

The protection and inheritance of ICH have become a global topic, and domestic and foreign academic circles have conducted extensive and in-depth discussions on it. Domestic research generally indicates that under the fierce impact of modernization and urbanization, traditional handicraft-based ICH is facing inheritance dilemmas characterized by "internal troubles and external threats".

On one hand, its internal inheritance system is on the verge of collapse. Many scholars (e.g., Feng Jicai, 2013; Liu Kuili, 2015) point out that the traditional "oral teaching and mental comprehension" model centered on families and master-apprentice relationships has suffered a severe breakdown, and the shortage of successors is the core crisis. This stems from the long learning cycle and low economic benefits of handicrafts, which fail to attract young people effectively (Song Junhua, 2017)^[4], significantly increasing the risk of

"crafts disappearing with artisans".

On the other hand, the external living space is compressed. Studies by Ma Bing'an (2012) and others argue that cheap mass-produced substitutes from industrialization flood the market, greatly squeezing the living space of traditional handicrafts. As a result, traditional handicrafts have retreated from mainstream daily necessities to marginalized ornamental or collectible items, losing their "living" variability in daily life (Liu Shouhua, 2018). In addition, Qi Qingfu (2007) and other scholars emphasize that phenomena such as "valuing application over protection" and "valuing development over inheritance" in protection work, as well as the rigid and museum-like protection methods, further disconnect ICH from the current social and cultural context, making it difficult to achieve genuine creative transformation and innovative development.

To address the above dilemmas, "productive protection" and "educational inheritance" are regarded as two important breakthrough paths. Among them, "integrating ICH into campuses" and "integrating ICH into colleges and universities", as core measures of educational inheritance, have received great attention from the academic community and policy-makers in recent years. Existing studies generally recognize the unique value of colleges and universities in ICH inheritance: colleges and universities are highlands of knowledge innovation, capable of providing academic depth, interdisciplinary integration, and innovative design capabilities for ICH (Xu Yiyi, 2016)^[9]. Many case studies, such as the exploration of cooperation models between Suzhou Embroidery, Jingdezhen Ceramics, and colleges and universities (Fang Lili, 2019)^[9], have proven that models like the "modern apprenticeship system" and studio model can effectively combine traditional craftsmanship with modern design and marketing, cultivating compound talents who understand both craftsmanship and the market^[7].

2.2. Foreign Research on Integrating ICH into Colleges and Universities

Foreign academic research on integrating ICH into higher education extends beyond the mere teaching of craftsmanship teaching and shifts towards in-depth paradigm reconstruction. Deeply influenced by the "critical heritage studies" school^[10], it regards ICH as a dynamic cultural process rather than a static heritage object. The research focus has shifted from "how to preserve" to "for whom to inherit", and strongly questions the traditional "authoritative heritage discourse" often defined by elites. On this basis, the role of colleges and universities has been repositioned as cultural collaborators and enablers of communities. Their core mission is to assist communities in consolidating cultural identity and regaining the right to interpret and dominate their own cultural heritage through academic support and equal dialogue, thereby achieving "Community Empowerment". This concept fundamentally transforms colleges and universities from potential "cultural extractors" to "cultural partners"^[11].

Guided by this concept, foreign colleges and universities have formed diverse practical models. The first is the academic criticism model, represented by colleges and universities in the UK and the Netherlands. They offer majors in "Critical Heritage Studies", treating ICH as an academic research object for deconstructing power, reflecting on politics and identity, rather than a simple protection target. The second is the community cooperation model, which is particularly prominent in North America and Australia. For

example, the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada has long-term cooperation with Indigenous communities. Through co-developed courses and the "Elder-in-Residence" system, colleges and universities have become platforms for community-led cultural inheritance and knowledge production^[13]. The third is the innovative experiment model, common in design and art colleges in Japan and Europe. For instance, Politecnico di Milano in Italy collaborates with handicraft workshops, integrating traditional crafts into modern design education, and extensively using digital technology for the preservation, dissemination, and recreation of ICH, revitalizing it in contemporary life^[15].

2.3. Reflections and Insights

There is still room for deepening in existing domestic research. Firstly, most studies focus on well-known ICH items with solid industrial foundations, such as Suzhou Embroidery and Ceramics, while paying insufficient attention to "niche" ICH categories like Jiang'an Bamboo Carving-although exquisite in craftsmanship, they have low popularity and face greater survival difficulties^[2-3]. The particularity of their dilemmas and the pertinence of their strategies need in-depth analysis. Secondly, discussions on dissemination strategies in colleges and universities often stay at the descriptive level of activities such as "lectures, exhibitions, and experience classes", lacking in-depth research on systematic construction from the perspective of mechanisms such as curriculum systems, credit recognition, interdisciplinary project incubation, and the integration of industry, education, and research^[8].

Foreign research and practice provide valuable insights for China. The primary insight is prioritizing ethics, reminding us to pay attention to power relations and cultural ownership issues in the process of "integrating ICH into colleges and universities"^[14]. We must abandon all forms of academic "plunder" and commit to building an equal and mutually beneficial long-term partnership with inheritance communities. Secondly, it demonstrates the possibility of expanding roles: colleges and universities are not only inheritance venues but also critical reflectors, technological innovation laboratories, and connectors for community services. Ultimately, these international experiences point to a common goal: the involvement of colleges and universities should not be "end-of-life care" for ICH^[5], but rather stimulating its internal vitality to help it achieve self-sustainability and sustainable development in the context of modernity. This provides important theoretical support and practical references for China's "integrating ICH into colleges and universities" initiative to move from "formalized" activities to "in-depth" participation.

3. Research Design

3.1. Research Methods

To in-depth analyze the feasibility of integrating Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into colleges and universities, this study adopts field investigation and questionnaire survey methods. The research tools used include interviews, questionnaires, and statistical data. Specific development strategies are proposed from three dimensions: inviting inheritors to campus, organizing campus cultural activities, and integrating social resources, forming a research logic of "current status - problems - strategies".

3.2. Research Questions

To achieve the research objectives, the following research questions are put forward:

What is the current status of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH?

What difficulties exist in integrating Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into colleges and universities?

What measures can help integrate Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into colleges and universities?

In the Internet era, what achievements have college students made in promoting the dissemination of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH?

3.3. Participants

This study selects students from the author's university as research subjects, inviting them to participate in questionnaires to understand their level of knowledge about Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH. Students who are willing to participate are also invited to attend offline campus lectures on Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH, appreciate Jiang'an Bamboo Carving artworks, and express their views on integrating this ICH into colleges and universities.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data are collected from interviews and questionnaire survey results. Firstly, through field visits to Jiang'an County, 5 inheritors of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving are invited for interviews, aiming to understand the current status of the dissemination and development of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving^[2]. Secondly, electronic questionnaires are distributed to college students to understand their level of knowledge about Jiang'an Bamboo Carving. The questionnaire includes 4 options, as follows: A = Very familiar; B = Generally familiar; C = Not familiar at all; D = Unwilling to know. Students who are willing to participate are invited to attend offline campus lectures on Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH. Finally, the focus is placed on dissemination in colleges and universities, and the significance of integrating Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into colleges and universities is elaborated^{[6][7]}.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Current Status of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH

Firstly, the inheritance team is aging with a serious gap between generations. Currently, there are only a handful of national and provincial-level representative inheritors of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving, with an average age of over 60. Although they have a few disciples, most of them are middle-aged artisans, and there are very few young inheritors in the true sense^{[2][3]}.

Secondly, the production scale is shrinking and market competitiveness is weak. The once-thriving bamboo carving factories no longer exist; the current production model is mainly based on family workshops and individual studios. The small production scale and low output fail to form economies of scale. At the same time, the market is flooded with cheap machine-made crafts. Jiang'an Bamboo Carving works, which are purely hand-made, have a long production cycle and high costs, and have no price advantage. Their artistic and cultural values have not been fully recognized and priced by the market, leading to narrow sales channels and meager incomes for practitioners, which makes it difficult to

attract new people to enter the industry^[4].

Thirdly, the craftsmanship inheritance model is single and innovation is insufficient. The current inheritance still mainly relies on the traditional "oral teaching and mental comprehension" master-apprentice model. Although this model can ensure the authenticity of craftsmanship, it also has limitations. Disciples are often confined to imitating the master's techniques and styles, making it difficult to break through stereotypes and carry out bold innovations. In today's era of increasingly diversified and personalized aesthetics, Jiang'an Bamboo Carving products have low integration of themes, shapes, and functions with modern lifestyles, making it difficult to attract the attention of young consumer groups^[7].

Fourthly, social awareness is limited and dissemination efforts are insufficient. Despite its reputation as a "national-level ICH", the popularity of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving is mostly limited to the collection circle, cultural circle, and local areas. The general public, especially the younger generation, knows very little about it. The lack of effective, sustained, and modern dissemination methods makes it difficult for its cultural influence to break through geographical and group limitations^[1].

To sum up, Jiang'an Bamboo Carving is in an awkward situation of "being praised but not continued". Its protection work has transitioned from the stage of "emergency recording" to a new stage that requires "innovative vitalization"^{[5][16]}.

4.2. Difficulties in Integrating Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into Colleges and Universities

4.2.1. The Specificity of Bamboo Carving Materials

Jiang'an Bamboo Carving has strict requirements on raw materials, relying on specific bamboo species and complex preprocessing procedures, resulting in high costs and difficulty in acquisition. Its craftsmanship is closely linked to the ecological environment of its origin. When introduced into colleges and universities, it is easy to be separated from its original cultural context, making it difficult for students to deeply understand the internal connection between materials and craftsmanship, and leading to superficial learning.

4.2.2. Limitations of the College Education System

The standardized, semester-based teaching system of colleges and universities conflicts with the personalized inheritance model of "oral teaching and mental comprehension" for Jiang'an Bamboo Carving. Due to the lack of academic qualifications and professional titles recognized by colleges and universities, inheritors find it difficult to obtain formal faculty status and reasonable remuneration, resulting in unstable cooperation. Disciplinary barriers also make it difficult to integrate cross-college resources, failing to form an effective synergy.

4.2.3. Difficulties for Students in Learning

Learning Jiang'an Bamboo Carving craftsmanship requires a long cycle and involves tedious practice, which demands a lot of after-class time. This conflicts with college students' fast-paced learning habits and heavy academic pressure^[4]. The high threshold of craftsmanship and the preciousness of materials easily make students feel daunted and frustrated, leading to high participation but few persistent learners, and making it difficult to achieve in-depth inheritance.

4.3. Measures to Promote the Integration of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH into Colleges and Universities

4.3.1. Inviting Inheritors to Campus

Inheritors of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH can cooperate with colleges and universities. Colleges and universities can regularly invite national and provincial-level inheritors to hold "Master Lectures" or "Famous Artisan Forums". The content of the lectures should not be limited to craftsmanship demonstrations, but should also include sharing their life experiences, insights from their craft practice, and understanding of traditional culture. Through their personal charm and craftsmanship spirit, they can influence students and achieve the goal of "educating people through culture".

Alternatively, long-term studios can be set up for top inheritors, making them permanent resources of colleges and universities. These studios serve as both bases for inheritors to create and teach, and internships and practice bases for students majoring in related fields. Students can observe and learn in a long-term and systematic manner here, forming in-depth master-apprentice relationships^[9].

4.3.2. Organizing Campus Cultural Activities

Colleges and universities can organize a variety of campus cultural activities, encouraging interested students to establish student clubs such as "Jiang'an Bamboo Carving Workshop". Fixed venues and funds should be provided to encourage students to independently plan regular activities. Promote cross-border integration between Jiang'an Bamboo Carving and campus clubs focused on literature, music, and animation, expanding its influence through innovative artistic forms and creating an immersive cultural atmosphere.

4.3.3. Integrating Social Resources

Inheritors of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH should actively sign strategic agreements with the government of the origin of bamboo carving, obtaining policy, financial, and raw material support, and making colleges and universities become think tanks for local cultural innovation. Link cultural and creative enterprises, design companies, and e-commerce platforms to jointly develop products and open up the transformation chain from students' creativity to market sales, which in turn feeds back to inheritance. Collaborate with primary and secondary schools and museums to build educational bases and exhibition spaces, radiating ICH dissemination to the whole society^[13].

4.4. Achievements of College Students in Promoting the Dissemination of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH in the Internet Era

In the context of the Internet era, college students have become an indispensable and active force in the dissemination system of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH. Through new media platforms, digital technologies, and community operations, they have injected new vitality into the contemporary dissemination of this traditional craftsmanship and achieved remarkable results.

In terms of content creation and dissemination, the student group has demonstrated outstanding innovation capabilities. They proficiently use new media platforms such as TikTok, Bilibili, and Xiaohonshu (REDnote), transforming Jiang'an Bamboo Carving craftsmanship into diverse content forms that conform to the laws of online dissemination. By creating high-quality short videos such as immersive creation vlogs,

interesting knowledge popularization clips, and cross-border creations with animation IPs, they have successfully broken through the barriers to the dissemination of traditional cultural content. These contents not only maintain the authenticity of the craftsmanship but also integrate contemporary aesthetic elements, enabling Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH to obtain millions of views online and significantly enhancing its recognition and influence among young groups.

In terms of community building and market expansion, students have played an important bridging role. Through the establishment of online communities such as WeChat groups and Weibo super topics, they have transformed scattered enthusiasts into a stable fan base, realizing the shift from one-way dissemination to two-way interaction. At the same time, students have opened online stores on e-commerce platforms and carried out live-streaming e-commerce activities, using new media marketing methods to develop sales channels for Jiang'an Bamboo Carving products. This innovative model not only brings direct economic benefits to inheritors but also, more importantly, establishes a new connection mechanism between market demand and traditional craftsmanship.

These practical achievements show that college students have transformed from passive cultural recipients into active content producers, community connectors, and digital innovators. Using the advantages of Internet technology and platforms, they have built a new paradigm for the dissemination of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH, providing a referenceable innovative path for the contemporary inheritance of traditional craftsmanship^[15]. This in-depth integration of youth power and traditional culture is injecting lasting vitality into the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

The protection and inheritance of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving is a long-term and arduous systematic project. It not only needs to adhere to the "authenticity" of its core craftsmanship and cultural genes^[14] but also must embrace the times and seek "vitality" through innovation. The traditional inheritance model can no longer stand alone in the current era, and new approaches must be developed.

Colleges and universities, with their unique resource advantages and educational functions, should become important "laboratories" and "cradles of innovation" for the inheritance and innovation of ICH. By promoting the integration of inheritors into campuses, organizing rich cultural activities, and building a diverse social cooperation network, the closed dilemma of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving inheritance can be effectively broken, and fresh blood and innovative ideas can be injected into it.

Students are also a fresh force in promoting the culture of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH. In the Internet era, relying on digital technology and innovative thinking, they have injected new vitality into this traditional craftsmanship. Through new media platforms such as TikTok and Bilibili, students have created diverse content such as immersive vlogs and interesting popular science clips, successfully promoting the cross-circle dissemination of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving culture among young groups. They have established online communities and managed fan group super topics, gathering enthusiasts from all over the world into a cultural community. Through live-streaming e-commerce and online store operations, they have developed new sales channels for Jiang'an Bamboo Carving products, realizing the two-way

transformation of cultural value and economic benefits. These practices fully demonstrate that college students have grown into indispensable content producers, community connectors, and digital innovators in the dissemination system of Jiang'an Bamboo Carving ICH, injecting lasting vitality into the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage.

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